

ROLE OF SELECT COURTIER AND OFFICIALS AT LAHORE DARBAR (1799- 1849)

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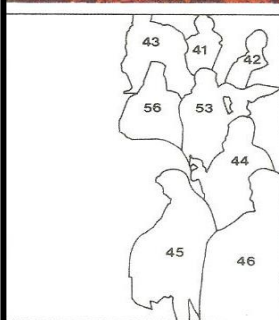
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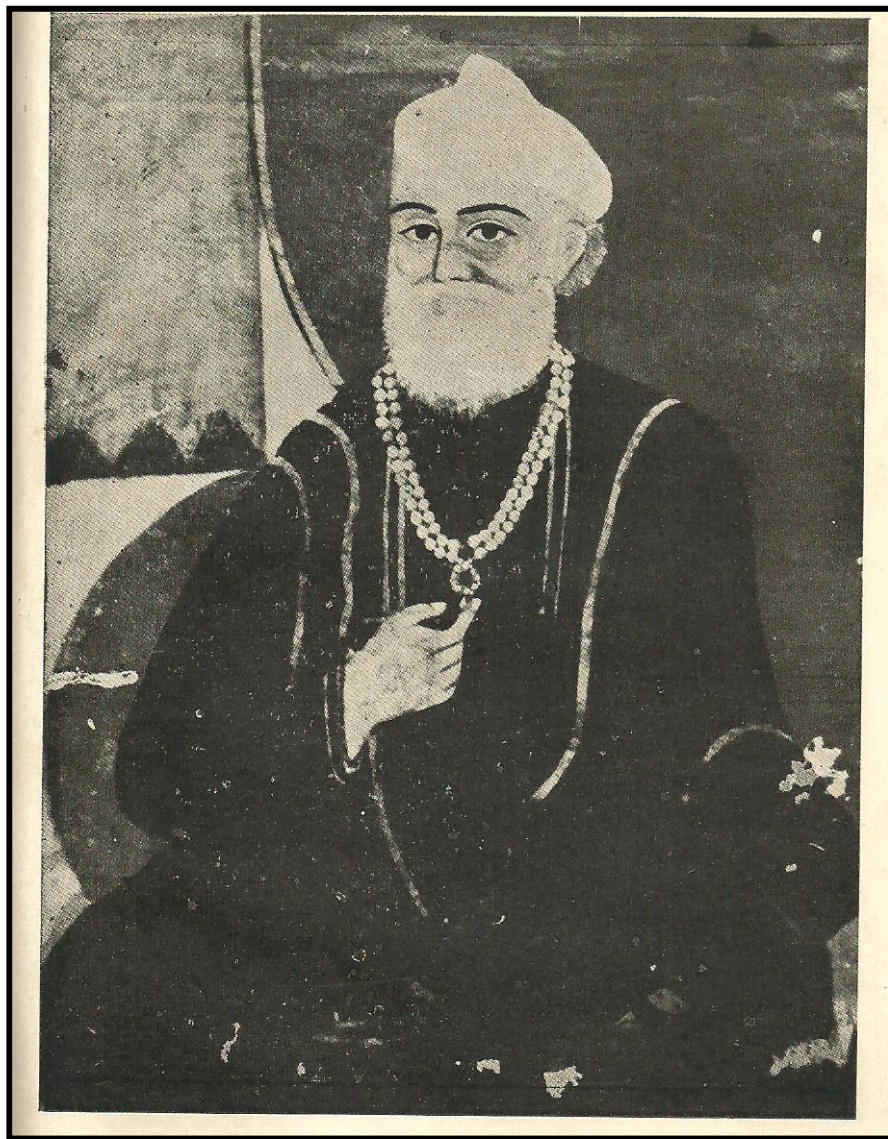
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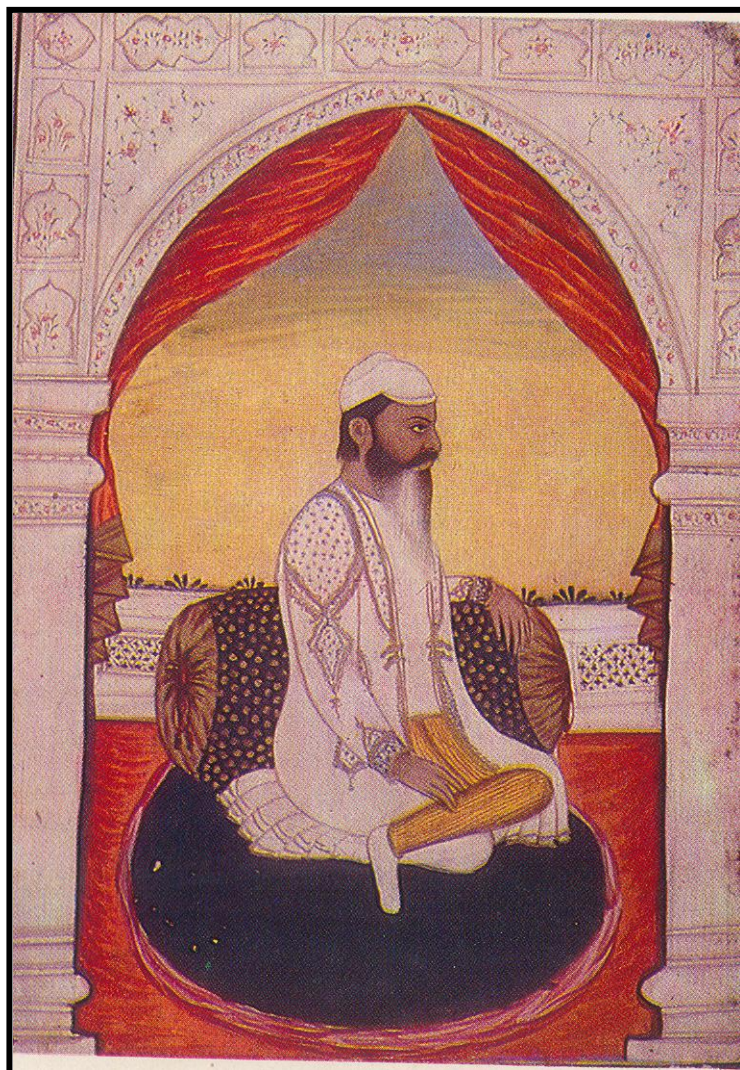
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Raja Dina Nath Bahadur (p.82)

PREFACE

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was like a meteor who shot up in the sky and dominated the scene for about half a century in the History of India. His greatness cannot be paralleled by any of his contemporaries. He was a benign ruler and always cared for the welfare of his subjects irrespective of their caste or creed. The Maharaja had full faith in the broad based harmony and cooperation with which the Hindus and the Muslims lived and maintained peace and prosperity. The evidence of the whole hearted co-operation of the Hindu Courtiers, Generals and Administrators is not far to seek. The spirit of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule was secular.

*In the present thesis I have selected only the Hindu Courtiers and Officials at the Lahore Darbar. For working on such a topic entitled, **"Role of Select Courtiers and Officials at Lahore Darbar 1799-1849"** one is bound to study Archival records and Khalsa Darbar Records available in various forms, such as Foreign Department, Home Department, translated work and sources based on Khalsa Darbar Records available in Punjab State Archives. During the four and half years period of my research, various places like Punjab State Archives, Patiala and Branch Office Chandigarh, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti, New Delhi, Secretariat Library, Chandigarh; Punjab University Library, Chandigarh; Dawarka Das Library, Chandigarh; Bhai Kahn Singh Library, Punjabi University, Patiala; Guru Nanak Dev University Library, Amritsar; Bhasha Vibhag Library, Patiala were visited to find out relevant material for the present thesis. Despite many difficulties, however attempt have been made to build this thesis on the present subject with the help of available primary and secondary sources.*

A large number of Hindu Courtiers and Officials were serving at the Lahore Darbar under the command and eye of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Some of them were of

great importance, considerable note and caliber. A few of them had earlier occupied ministerial/high ups posts in the Mughal Darbar of Delhi and under Kabul Government also. Doubtlessly, their contribution, role and achievements in the military and civil administration of the Lahore Darbar were not simply important, rather they also proved helpful in strengthening and consolidating the Sikh kingdom under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Though many valuable research projects have been undertaken and completed on various aspects and achievements of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and even his successors, yet to the best of my knowledge, no independent and systemic study of the Hindus, in his court, has been undertaken by the scholars hitherto. Thus the present work is an attempt to fill up this void in the history of Punjab of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time and of the period after his demise till 1849, when Punjab was annexed by the British Government. It is true that the Hindu Courtiers and Officials were important figures at the Lahore Darbar. Quite a few of them began their career as clerks or as troopers but with in a short span through their intelligence, caliber, hard work and ability rose to the highest positions at the Lahore Darbar.

Thus the present study examines their antecedents leading to their recruitment as well as the policy adopted by the Lahore Darbar particularly during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in this respect. Also an attempt has been made to present a detailed account of the most prominent/selected Hindus at the Lahore Darbar, such as Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Misr Beli Ram, Diwan Sawan Mal, Diwan Moti Ram, Misr Rup Lal, Diwan Ram Dayal, Diwan Kirpa Ram and Diwan Ajodhia Parshad and some others, who were working in average and ordinary capacities. Their role in the establishment of the Central Secretariat, in financial department and in commanding campaigns of Multan, Kashmir, Peshawar, Mankera, Jalandhar and Malwa region in particular have been discussed. Also, the performance of these Hindus in the Civil

Administration has been examined at length but critically. Their relations with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and after his death with his successors as well as with the nobility at Lahore Darbar have been examined thoroughly and also analytically.

As Stated above, the number of Hindus in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Darbar was large. No historian has been able to provide any particular record as to, how many Hindus were employed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in one capacity or the other. Undoubtly, some of them were men of great eminence, they were not only active, but efficient also. They were of invaluable importance to the regime as they had practical experience to their credit. This practical experience had been gained through their earlier experience under Kabul and Delhi Governments so they helped Maharaja Ranjit Singh to the best of their ability in the establishment, expansion and consolidation of his kingdom by their valuable service, suggestions and interest with which they worked. They worked up to the expectations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors..

Though many useful and valuable research work has been carried out on the subject of Ranjit Singh's rise and on his achievements in the various fields like military, civil and general administration as well as on the political, economic and socio-cultural conditions of this period but no independent research work or study on the Hindus as civil and military generals or officials of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Darbar has been undertaken. If at all there is a work of this nature it is neither focused nor comprehensive in its scope. It is worth mentioning that the Hindus as civil and military generals at Ranjit Singh's court worked with dedication, honesty and commitment.

The Hindu Courtiers and Officials who served in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign and under his successors were of two categories i.e. Brahmins and Khatris. There are many Hindu Courtiers and officials who worked at Lahore Darbar but no account about them has hitherto appeared in any form. Their careers, contributions, achievements, and importance have been traced out from various contemporary sources available in Persian,

Urdu, Punjabi and English. Their role and position have been studied keeping in mind the functioning of the Lahore Darbar during and after Maharaja Ranjit Singh so as to reveal their relation with other Dogras, Sikhs, Muslims and European Commanders, Generals and Courtiers.

The twelve Hindu Courtiers and Officials in question contributed to a great extent in building the Sikh kingdom and their contribution was not less than the Dogras, Muslims, Europeans and Sikh Generals, ministers and nobles. During the course of the present study, it has been felt that there was a large scope to include details about the role of these Hindu Courtiers and Officials in the establishment of the Central Secretariat and in the organization of the Financial Department of Sikh administration which is largely modeled on Kabul and Delhi Government. In this work efforts have also been made to trace out the role of number of the lesser known Hindu Courtiers and Officials at central and State level in general and to study their contribution in the establishment and growth of the Sikh empire.

We studied a large number of primary and secondary sources available in various languages such as Persian, Urdu, English and Punjabi related to the study of our present subject. Sohan Lal Suri's Umdat-ut-Tawarikh is a contemporary, authentic and official chronicle of the history of the Sikhs. Its Daftar II, III and IV deal effectively with the events of the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. These events throw an ample light on the activities and services rendered by these officers. There is another important work The Sikhs and the Afghans by Shahamat Ali which provides an eye witness account of Ranjit Singh's administration, revenue and the principal ministers and officials of the State. W.G. Osborne's famous work, Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh describes both the court as well as the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He has traced the life of the leading Sikhs in the court of the Maharaja as also the notable developments of this period. Events at the court of Ranjit Singh (1810-17) edited by H.L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra

is another important work. It has given an account of the day to day functioning of Lahore Darbar but does not contain a detailed account of the officials of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Punjab in 1839-40 edited by Dr. Ganda Singh has been studied. It depicts the life at the Maharaja's Court, in addition to the political and administrative system of the Sikh kingdom but much is not stated about the life style and working of the Hindu Courtiers and Officials of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court. Some useful material about the court and courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was accessed in Dr. Bhagat Singh's work Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times. Similarly, Prem Singh Hoti's books, Khalsa Raj De Usariaye (Do Jilda Vich) and Maharaja Ranjit Singh supply some information about the lives, position and status enjoyed by the Hindus at Lahore Darbar who served at the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh but their impact on the political and administrative set up of the Sikh kingdom is completely absent in these works. Gulcharan Singh's Ranjit Singh and His Generals was also part of research study but this work also provides a skeletal account about the Military services of these officers. The other related aspects of their lives, careers and achievements have not been discussed and examined analytically. Dr. J.S. Grewal and Dr. Indu Banga edited Civil and Military affairs of Maharaja Ranjit Singh which deals with the role of officials in civil and military affairs only. Similarly, B.J. Hasrat's work Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and G.L. Chopra's The Punjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839) has given good account of conquests and Civil and Military administration and court and Courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Barkat Rai Chopra's work Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45 gives a detailed account of the Khalsa Darbar after the death of Ranjit Singh and N.K. Sinha's work Ranjit Singh throws some authentic light on conquests, administration, army and the position and status of different officials at Lahore Darbar. Though these works throw considerable light on life, career and achievements of Maharaja Ranjit Singh but there is need to explore new sources to examine the role of

Hindu Courtiers and Officials in the Lahore Darbar. No doubt, many new sources material have come to light which throw ample light not only on the careers of the Hindu courtiers but also tell us about their relations with the nobility of Lahore Darbar as well as with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. Thus, it is clear that the scope of further investigation on this theme is not only self-explanatory and immense but also necessary in order to understand independent contribution of Hindu Courtiers and Official's at the Lahore Darbar in detail. Some notable works have been written by scholars on the other courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh like Dogras, Attariwalas, Sandhawalias, Europeans and Muslims who served in different capacities at Lahore Darbar but Hindus were somehow ignored though they deserved attention. These and other such factors motivated me to select this topic for research purpose to reflect the life, role and contribution in civil and military fields of Hindu Courtiers and Officials at Lahore Darbar.

Thus the present study is an attempt to fill up this gap in the history of Punjab of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time till the period after his demise till 1849, when Punjab was annexed by the British Government. It will not be out of place if the aims and objectives of present study are also cited here, of course, in brief.

It is true that Hindus were important figures at the Lahore Darbar. The purpose of this study is to examine critically the Maharaja's aims and objectives behind recruiting Hindus in his court. It is also to study what prompted them to join service under him and even to continue during the time of Maharaja's successors. In the present study effort has been to trace out and discuss their relations with the Maharaja, his successors and the other members of the nobility on one hand and their relations with the British Government on the other. The Privileges, power and position enjoyed by them as well as the restrictions put on them by the Maharaja have been examined critically. Also we have studied, at length their services and contribution in the civil and military

administration of the Lahore Darbar. The reforms which were introduced by them in the provincial administration and what impact did it leave is also discussed. The significance of their presence and role in the day to day activities of that period under Ranjit Singh and even after his death till the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849 has been highlighted as it is one of the objectives of the present study. Their role in the conspiracies and intrigues at Lahore Darbar especially after the death of Ranjit Singh has been examined critically as well. The impact of their characters, careers and caliber in various walks of life, such as political, military, socio-cultural has too been discussed analytically. Another objective of this study has remained to study if their presence in any way helped the Maharaja and his successors in keeping the indigenous elements under effective control. The merits of their war services and services in the military and civil administration during the period under review have been discussed and examined critically. How did they perform their duties which were entrusted to them and to what extent did they prove useful to the Lahore Darbar as well as their habits, likings and disliking also form the part of the present study. In this work efforts have also been made to trace out the role of number of the lesser known Hindu Courtiers and Officials at central and State levels in general and to study their contribution in the establishment and growth of Sikh Empire. Undoubtedly, they contributed constructively in building up the Sikh Empire.

Lastly, it will be meaningful if the chapterization of the present thesis is narrated here to just give an idea about the total plan of this study. Chapter-I deals with the early life and career of these twelve prominent Hindu Courtiers and Official in particular and some less important Hindus of Ranjit Singh's Darbar in general; when and why were they recruited by the Maharaja; also the criteria of their selection has been discussed. In this chapter, a brief account of their position under Maharaja Ranjit Singh; formers relation with the nobility and the British has been examined critically but briefly.

Chapter II deals with the establishment of the Central Secretariat; to what extent did they help the Maharaja in its establishment; what methods were used by them to organize it and how the daftars came into being. During the course of the present study, it was felt that there was a great scope to include details about the role of these Hindu Courtiers and Officials in the establishment of the Central Secretariat as also in the organization of Financial and Civil administration and in the strengthening of the Sikh Kingdom.

Chapter III deals with the role of the Hindus in the financial administration. It studies their contribution in efforts to improve and enhance the financial resources. Land Revenue was the main source of income. Besides this main source others sources of income are also considered. The new methods introduced by the Hindus for financial regulation are also discussed critically.

Chapter IV deals with the Hindus as military Commanders and Generals, their rank, status and position; their military services, their participation in various campaigns and contribution made in the battlefields. Their role in the establishment and expansion of the Sikh kingdom particularly in the early career of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's also discussed. The nature and composition of the Khalsa army is also highlighted to establish the utility and merits of their presence in the Lahore Darbar during the life time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and after his demise till the annexation of Punjab in 1849.

Chapter V discusses the role of Hindu Courtiers as provincial Nazims or Governors. Some of them along with their services in the military department were also assigned different duties in the civil administration of the State. Hindus have been estimated keeping in mind their caliber, commitment and loyalty towards the Lahore Darbar and the Sikh State. The extent to which they came up to the expectations of the

Maharaja also form a part of this chapter. The chapter endeavours to resolve if they were able to leave any imprint and that has been discussed and estimated.

Chapter VI deals with the activities and role played by Hindu Courtiers and Officials at Lahore Darbar after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839. Their loyalty to the Lahore Darbar; their participation in conspiracies and intrigues along with other Sardars against the successor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh have been analysed. The position and privileges they enjoyed in the Lahore Darbar after the death of the Maharaja; the difficulties and problems they experienced; their role during the time of the first and second Anglo-Sikh Wars, their relations with the nobility and also the Sikh army have also been discussed in this chapter. Their relation with the British till the annexation of the Punjab is also discussed analytically.

Chapter VII tries to narrate the conclusions and findings of the whole study.

The present thesis is based largely on primary sources such as contemporary Persian works of Sohan Lal Suri, Ganesh Das Wadehra, Bute Shah, Amarnath and Kanhiya Lal; accounts of the contemporary travellers, memories of foreign officers, etc. Secondary sources have also been made use of. Annual administrative reports and Gazetteers are also important sources of information and reference. The conclusions arrived at in this study are only such as primary and contemporary evidences have yielded. In case of all information, rigorous historical methodology has been applied and proper historical balance has been constantly kept in mind.

Words are often a mode of expression for one's deep feelings and I feel my words are not enough to express my heartiest gratitude and indebtedness to those who have assisted me in one or other way in writing this project.

With folded hands, I want to thank the 'Almighty' who is the guiding sources of my life.

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On personal plane, I offer my heart felt gratitude to my father S. Shamsher Singh Sahi and Mother Smt. Balvir Kaur Sahi, who have always been pillars of strength in my life and without whose constant love and support I would not have realized my academic potential. My sisters Jatinder and Neetu and My brother Aman vied with one other in providing me with constant flow of love and affection which was needed the most to sustain my uninterrupted involvement in this work. My little niece Prabhlin and nephew Tanraj brought whiffs of fresh air whenever monotony threatened to set in. I must thanks all the members of my in-laws family especially my parents and my fiancé Manipal Singh Shergill for his encouragement, strength, mental support during the time of research. Words and gestures can spur a person in many meaningful ways and my fiancé has also proved to be a fountain head of inspiration. My thanks to my friend and sister-in-law Kiran for her support and cooperation. My indebtedness to each one is too deep for words.

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Dated:

Rajinder Kaur

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the early life and career of twelve prominent Hindu Courtiers and Officials in particular and also some lesser important Hindu Courtiers at the Lahore *Darbar* during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's regime. An attempt has been made to cite how, when and why they were recruited by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The criteria followed by the *Maharaja* to select and appoint them and also assign them different portfolios in the administrative machinery of the Sikh kingdom is also the subject of study.

As we knew the court of Ranjit Singh was secular in character and the *Maharaja* was the central figure. As merit was the main criterion for appointment, persons belonging to different religions and races were appointed to high posts without any discrimination. His penetrating look read with great precision the underlying qualities of a man, and he did not care much about the fact that whether the one whom he had chosen was a *Sikh*, *Hindu* or *Muslim*. A single ordinary test was all that he required to assess the candidate's real worth. He was an absolute despot and nobody could interfere with what he desired to do. The persons, that he kept around him were generally men of the world, trained in the struggle of life, expert at getting ahead at the cost of others, designing and astute in the fulfillment of their duties. No ruler of ancient or medieval Indian History could match Ranjit Singh who had appointed, to important posts, more than forty persons, hailing from more than a dozen foreign nationalities.

Ranjit Singh's courtiers did not form a homogeneous body. They represented various creeds, diverse races and different traditions. They included the *Dogras*, the *Muslims*, the *Europeans*, the *Sikhs*, and the *Hindus* and to this list may be added the *Brahmins*. The *Brahmins* formed a separate group because the *Brahmins* distinguished themselves distinct from *Hindus* in general. This approach of the *Maharaja* clearly established that the nature and character of the Sikh state under him was secular.

Here, in this chapter broadly speaking, a large number of Hindu courtiers and officials, who served the *Maharaja* and also his successor's regime are discussed. The *Hindus* were drawn from several groups like the *Rajputs*, the *Brahmins* the *Khatris*, the *Ghurkhas* and the *Purbias*. The discussion in this chapter deals with the *Hindus* who belonged to the *Brahmin* and *Khatri* castes. In the group of *Khatris*, there were Diwan Mohkam Chand, his son Moti Ram and grandsons Ram Dayal and Kirpa Ram, Diwan Bhawani Das and his brother Diwan Devi Das, Diwan Sawan Mal and Diwan Karam Chand. In the group of *Brahmins* there were Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Diwan Ajodhia Prashad, Misr Diwan Chand, Misr Beli Ram and his brother Misr Rup Lal. Some of the were prominent commanders, generals, administrators and provincial Governors.

It is interesting to note that some of Ranjit Singh's Hindu Courtiers and Officials were people who had escaped from their previous situations because they felt dissatisfied and mostly belonged to normal/common families. Diwan Mohkam Chand was a fugitive from Gujrat where Sahib Singh Bhangi was after his life. Diwan Ganga Ram and Diwan Bhawani Das, both of them came to Lahore under difficult circumstances. The *Misr* brothers, Diwan Sawan Mal, Misr Diwan Chand also belonged to

common family. Full respect was shown to the religion of the Hindus. Notably, the people holding the highest jobs in his government, like the *Dogra* brothers, the *Misrs* and several others strictly adhered to their Hindu forms of religion. The *Maharaja* entrusted the talented Hindus with jobs involving very important responsibilities related with the state. Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath and Beli Ram headed the revenue and finance departments of the State of Lahore. Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misr Diwan Chand and Ram Dyal worked as top ranking military officers. Diwan Sawan Mal, Diwan Moti Ram, Misr Rup Lal were some of his best provincial Governors.

DIWAN MOHKAM CHAND

The most distinguished of the generals by whose skill and courage Ranjit Singh rose from a chief-ship to the stature of Emperor of the Punjab was Diwan Mohkam Chand. Mohkam Chand was no soldier by birth. He was the son of a Kochhar *Khatri* trader named Baisakhi Mal of Kunjah in Gujrat (Pakistan)¹ and previous to joining the *Maharaja's* service, he worked as a *Munshi* under Dal Singh Gill of Akalgarh.² He remained with Dal Singh till 1804, when that chief died and his estates were seized by Ranjit Singh. Sehju, the widow of the Sardar, disliked Mohkam Chand and demanded his accounts, as for many years he had held the entire management of the Akalgarh property. However, the *Diwan* did not care to expose them to a close and unfriendly scrutiny, and thus left the job and joined the service of Sardar Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat.³ The *Bhangi* Chief appointed him *Diwan*. After three years, he

1 J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, (Trans and ed.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, Amritsar, 1975, p.71.

2 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, Lahore, 1885, 1889, English Trans. V.S. Suri, Amritsar, 2002, p. 5.

3 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, Lahore, 1961, (Punjabi Trans.), p. 470.

quarreled with the *Sardar* and was imprisoned.⁴ The *Sardar* ordered that the *Diwan* was to be executed. But due to the intervention of the *Sardar's* wife Chand Kaur, he was released⁵ and got employment under Ranjit Singh in 1806.⁶ Maharaja Ranjit Singh, appreciating the talents of Mohkam Chand and made him the Chief of his army, much to the chagrin of the Sikh *Sardars*.⁷ He proved an able general and fully justified the confidence of the Sikh *Sardars*.

From 1806 to 1814 he was associated with almost all the military campaigns of the *Maharaja*. During the period of consolidation of power by Ranjit Singh, and until his death Diwan Mohkam Chand was a constant companion of the Lahore Monarch. The *Maharaja* acknowledged his military ingenuity by conferring on him the titles of *Diwan* and *Fateh Nasib* in 1812.⁸ He joined the expeditions of the *Maharaja* to the Cis-Sutlej territory in 1806 and 1807⁹, Sialkot in 1808¹⁰, Kangra in 1809¹¹ Jalandhar in 1811¹², against Kashmir in conjunction with Fateh Khan in 1812¹³ and against Fateh Khan himself in 1813, where he defeated the Afghan Wazir at the battle of Haidaru.¹⁴ Besides these he got the *Nazrana* from Basoli, Rajauri, Kulu and Multan.

Diwan Mohkam Chand was an excellent administrator as the Governor of Jalandhar Doab. Between 1806 and 1814, Mohkam Chand

4 W.L. M'c Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol-I, Allahabad, 1846 (reprint), p. 154.

5 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p. 470.

6 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 58.

7 S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1964, p. 364.

8 G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, Hoshiarpur, 1960, p.104; Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Patiala, 2001, p. 96.

9 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp.72-80.

10 Gulcharan Singh, "Diwan Mohkam Chand", *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta, September 1970, Vol-XVIII, p. 32.

11 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p.90.

12 *Ibid.*, p.117

13 *Ibid.*, p.132; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, Lahore, 1928, (Punjabi Trans.), Janak Singh, (ed.) by Kirpal Singh, Patiala, 1983, p. 61.

14 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 145; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, MS 1855, Punjab State Archives, Patiala (Punjabi Trans.), Jeet Singh Seetal, p. 155.

was the man next in importance to the *Maharaja*. His advise was sought on various issues. When Metcalf visited the Lahore *Darbar* in September 1808, Mohkam Chand with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia was sent to receive the English envoy at Kasur.¹⁵ During 1808 and 1809 Ranjit Singh was critically analysing the political situation and was in a fix whether to adopt a policy of peace or war vis-a-vis the cis-Satluj states. He utilized the unique position occupied by Diwan Mohkam Chand to devise a very clever strategy. He himself talked of peace while Mohkam Chand made preparations for war. It is said that one day when Diwan Mohkam Chand, Sardar Mit singh and Fakir Aziz-ud-Din called upon Charles Metcalf, Diwan Mohkam Chand remarked that the British had not seen the *Sikh* fighting to which the British envoy retorted that the *Sikhs* had also not seen the English fighting in the battle field, and probably that was why they were talking like that.¹⁶ *The Maharaja* in his shrewdness told Metcalf that "the *Diwan* for his advanced age and general control he had all over all affairs was a privileged character and very difficult to manage".¹⁷ Metcalf, of course discerned the diplomatic behaviour of Ranjit Singh and never made the mistake of thinking that *the Maharaja* was being thwarted by his officer. ¹⁸ After the treaty of Amritsar was signed on April 25, 1809, Diwan Mohkam Chand went further and called it a piece of treachery and an insult.¹⁹

At the time of Mehtab Kaur's death Ranjit Singh was at Amritsar where the death of the former had taken place. Ranjit Singh got annoyed

15 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 76; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, MS, 1848, (Punjabi Trans.) p. 52; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, Patiala, 2003 (reprint), p. 313.

16 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 66; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 51-52.

17 *Foreign Department; Political Consultation*, 13th March 1808, No. 45, National Archives of India, New Delhi (hereafter read it NAI).

18 Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, pp. 79-81; N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1933, pp. 174-75.

19. Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, p. 54.

with Sada Kaur for some reason and he chose not to attend the cremation and other condolatory ceremonies. After a lot of appeals and persuasions, Diwan Mohkam Chand was able to take the *Maharaja* to Sada Kaur's *derah*, where he performed some of the important ceremonies of condolence.²⁰

Diwan Mohkam Chand had strained relations with prominent courtier called Fakir Aziz-ud-Din. In 1811, the *Khatris* of Gujrat complained that Fakir Imam-ud-din, brother of Fakir Aziz-ud-din, had killed a cow in order to propitiate a Pir and the thigh of a cow was thrown in the house of a Hindu. The Hindu produced the thigh and asserted that in the administration of the Fakir Imam-ud-Din such things were happening. Diwan Mohkam Chand, who bore animus towards Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, sided with the Hindus. As a repercussion of this incident, the shops were closed at Amritsar, Lahore, Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Gujrat and Jalalpur. At last the dispute was settled through the appointment of a Hindu *Amil* at Gujrat by *the Maharaja* and Imam-ud-Din was appointed as *Amil* at Jalandhar.²¹ In 1813, during the battle of Haidaru, the discord between Diwan Mohkam Chand and Bhai Ram Singh came to the surface. They even resorted to getting each other insulted by their subordinate sowars.²²

Diwan Mohkam Chand died on October 29, 1814, on Saturday, at Phillaur²³ and his tomb was erected in a garden at that place. At the time of his death he held a *Jagir* worth Rs. 642, 161 of annual income²⁴. He left behind an illustrious son Diwan Moti Ram, and grandsons Diwan

20 Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab* pp. 53-54.

21 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, p. 494.

22 Ram Sukh Rao, *Fateh Singh Partap Parbhakar*, MS M/774, Punjab State Archives, Patiala ff. 246b.

23 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh.*, p. 85; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* Daftar II, p. 172.

24 G.S. Chhabra, *The Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, Jalandhar, 1973, p. 199.

Kirpa Ram and Diwan Ram Dyal who too rendered a significant service to the Sikh State. Ranjit Singh had held Diwan Mohkam Chand in high esteem throughout his career. In August 1831 when Captain Wade visited the *Maharaja* the latter articulated his admiration of Mohkam Chand's faithfulness and ability before the visitor²⁵ and again in May 1833 Ranjit Singh remarked, "Today I am reminded of the intelligence, faithfulness and courageous assurances of Diwan Mohkam Chand."²⁶

About his character Murray writes, "the Diwan was liberal, upright, and high minded he enjoyed the confidence of the troops placed under his command and was popular and much respected amongst the entire Sikh community."²⁷

25 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, (Part-1) p. 67.

26 *Ibid.* p. 171.

27 Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, Patiala, 1970, p. 23; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Lahore, 1865, p.556; says as a general he had been almost always successful; his administrative talents were as great as his military ones and in his death the *Maharaja* lost his most loyal and devoted servant. According to W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 174. The *Diwan* was a man of the greatest military tact and had always been successful in various important commands bestowed on him by the *Maharaja*.

DIWAN MOTI RAM

Diwan Moti Ram was the only son of the famous Diwan Mohkam Chand the greatest general of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When Mohkam Chand was assigned some other duties, the *Doab* was managed by his son Moti Ram.²⁸ He was a man of great ability and after the death of Diwan Mohkam Chand, he succeeded in his *Jagirs* and the title of *Diwan* was confirmed upon him.²⁹ He was appointed the first Governor of Kashmir in 1819.³⁰ He served as Governor of Kashmir from 1819 to 1826 with a small gap in between which was filled up by Hari Singh Nalwa. He was one of the most respected, efficient and honest officers of Ranjit Singh. He was a wise and cautious administrator. He was keen to do something positive to ameliorate the condition of the poor Kashmiris but the *Dogra* brothers who were not in favour of Diwan Mohkam Chand's family and who had great influence at Lahore always placed obstacles in the way of this family and never allowed them a free hand in the administration of the territory. As a result of the machinations of the *Dogras* he was ousted from power in 1827.

Diwan Moti Ram was always sent on political missions by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In 1826, when Lord Amehersat visited Shimla, Diwan Moti Ram with Fakir Imam-ud-Din and Vakil Ram Dayal went there to meet him on behalf of the *Maharaja*.³¹ In 1830, he was appointed a member of the mission which waited upon Lord William Bentick at Shimla.³² He was given the dependency of Kunjah in December 1831 including the estates worth amounts as mentioned: Haveli and Kabula, Rs. 5,000; Pakka

28 W.E. Purser, *Final Report of the Revised Settlement of the Jalandhar District in the Punjab*, Lahore, 1892, p.41.

29 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 85.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 132, Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 4; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 355; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p. 519.

31 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 35.

32 Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, pp. 79-80.

Sudda, Rs. 40,000; Maroof Rs. 40,000; Pak Pattan Rs. 13,000; Jaithpur Rs. 15,000; Mari Anandpur Rs. 21,000; Baloch estate Rs. 21,000; Centre of the Defender of the Faith Rs. 5,000; Thuthawala Rs. 11,000; Harind and Dajal Rs. 40,000; Chutala Rs. 10,000; Estate of Amar Singh, *Thanedar* of Anandpur in the *Doaba* Rs. 7,000; Parmanad Rs. 40,000 and the total areas Rs. 3,07,000.³³ Though Diwan Moti Ram was a *Nazim* yet he also participated in the final expedition of Multan in 1818.³⁴ He was not only a good soldier, but was also well versed in politics.

The family of Diwan Mohkam Chand gradually fell from the grace of the *Maharaja*. He went to Banaras and his *Jagirs* lapsed to the State. The family *Jagirs* of Diwan Mohkam Chand had already been taken back by the Lahore government. Disgusted and disappointed Diwan Moti Ram died at Banaras in 1837.³⁵ Ranjit Singh had good opinion of the *Diwan* and once remarked that he was not like Diwan Mohkam Chand his father, yet he was better than others.³⁶

DIWAN KIRPA RAM

Diwan Kirpa Ram was the younger son of Diwan Moti Ram, son of celebrated Diwan Mohkam Chand. He performed multifarious duties as a *Nazim*, a *Diwan*, a soldier and an administrator. However, amongst the Sikh Governors, Diwan Kirpa Ram enjoyed the best reputation.³⁷

Diwan Kirpa Ram commanded the forces many a time. He took part in the expedition of Mankera with Misr Diwan Chand.³⁸ In 1823, he took

33 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, (Part-I), (Eng. Trans.) V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1974, pp. 111-112.

34 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 100; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 168; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p.2.

35 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III (Part-III), p. 327.

36 *Ibid*, Daftar III (Part-I), p. 67.

37 Baron Schonberg, *Travels in India and Kashmir*, Vol. II, London, 1853, pp. 96-97; cited in G.M. D. Sufi, *A History of Kashmir*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1974, p. 731; G.T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo*, Vol. II, London, 1842, p. 75.

38 Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 207.

part in the battle of Naushehra in which the Afghan army under Mohammad Azim Khan of Kabul suffered a heavy defeat.³⁹

Although Diwan Kirpa Ram participated in minor expeditions he was mainly reputed as a good administrator or Governor. He acted as the *Nazim* of the Jalandhar Doab on behalf of his father Diwan Moti Ram who was holding Kashmir as well as the Jalandhar Doab in *Nizamat*.⁴⁰ In 1826, Diwan Kirpa Ram was appointed the *Nazim* of Kashmir.⁴¹ He administered Kashmir in an excellent manner and paid the revenue regularly.

Intelligent and having exquisite ideas of magnificence, he beautified Kashmir with many fine buildings. In Srinagar, Ram Bagh was built by Diwan Kirpa Ram. In his home town Kunjah, he had constructed many fine buildings and gardens. A fine masonry tank and a handsome *baradari* garden and fountains in the vicinity preserve the name of Diwan Kirpa Ram in the memory of the people.⁴² Diwan Kirpa Ram loved luxury, especially boating. Hence his name commonly popular in the valley was *Kirpa Shoriyan* on account of the jingling noise of small bells emanating from the women's hand and feet⁴³ and for his indulgences in 'Char Chinar' an islet in the Dal Lake.

In 1824 and 1831, Diwan Kirpa Ram and his father Diwan Moti Ram incurred the displeasure of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Both the times he was heavily fined. Infact, Diwan Kirpa Ram greatly suffered in the estimate of the *Maharaja* due to the intrigues of the *Dogras* and was made to pay fines and to suffer sequestration of the property. He asked permission to join his father in Banaras which was refused. Disgusted

39 *Ibid.* p. 220; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, p. 542.

40 W.E. Purser, *Final Report of the Revised Settlement of the Jalandhar District in the Punjab*, p. 41.

41 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, p. 578; W.L. McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 196.

42 J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, (Trans. and ed.) *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, p. 71; *District Gazetteer of Gujrat*, 1883-84, p. 120.

43 G.T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo*, Vol-II, pp. 74-75.

and disgraced, in December 1834, he went on an assumed pilgrimage to Jawala Mukhi and from there crossed to the British territory across the Sultej⁴⁴ and joined his father at Banaras.

During the life time of Maharaja Kharak Singh, Prince Nau Nihal Singh, Rani Chand Kaur and Maharaja Sher Singh sent emissaries to urge Diwan Kirpa Ram to return to Lahore as a rival of Raja Dhian Singh, but the shrewd *Diwan* was wise in keeping himself out of the Lahore politics. Kirpa Ram died at Banaras. In 1837, once Maharaja Ranjit Singh while talking to Wade remarked about Diwan Kirpa Ram's bravery and qualities as a commander and said that "he was very obedient and loyal to the *Maharaja*".⁴⁵

DIWAN RAM DAYAL

Diwan Ram Dayal was grandson of Diwan Mohkam Chand and son of Diwan Moti Ram. He was employed on a number of minor campaigns. Like his grandfather he was an expert in military activities. He rose to the rank of a divisional commander at the youthful age of 21. He distinguished himself as commander of the Sikh division in the Kashmir expedition of 1814⁴⁶ against which his grandfather had remonstrated in vain in view of the difficulties ahead, in which, although the *Sikhs* were routed yet the bravery of Diwan Ram Dayal was highly appreciated even by the Afghans. He also participated in the conquest of Multan in 1818⁴⁷ and acquitted himself well. In 1819, Diwan Ram Dayal participated in the final and successful expedition against Kashmir.⁴⁸ He was sent to Hazara in 1820 after the killing of Bhai Makhan Singh and the recall of

44 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* Daftar-III (Part-II), pp. 216, 223.

45 *Ibid.*, (Part-III), p. 328.

46 Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 1.

47 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 235; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab* p. 198; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 2.

48 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 313.

Hukam Singh Chimni, the Governor.⁴⁹ This young and cautious general, accompanied by Prince Sher Singh, as nominal commander and Sardar Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, marched through the hills as far as the fort of Gandgarh to crush the Yusafzai tribes. At Hazara he gave tough time to Afghans and died fighting against them⁵⁰ at the young age of 28. He was extremely popular with his troops.

MISR DIWAN CHAND

Misr Diwan Chand was one of the courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who rose from the position of a petty clerk to Chief of artillery and commander-in-Chief of the armies. Misr Diwan Chand was a *Brahmin* by caste and belonged to Gondlanwala village in Gujranwala District.⁵¹ Earlier he had served under Nakai Chief Nodh Singh in his Modikhana as a weigher (*tola*) of grain . Once Diwan Chand was found short by ninety rupees in his accounts. Nodh Singh punished him for this lapse. He placed a musket on Misr Diwan Chand's shoulder and made him stand in the sun. This incident came to the notice of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he paid the short credits to Nodh Singh from his own *Toshakhana* and got the *Diwan* released.⁵² Maharaja Ranjit Singh took him into his service and initially appointed him as a clerk in the *Topkhana* of Mian Muhammad Ghaus Khan⁵³ at the age of 15 or 16 in 1812⁵⁴. He was very punctual in performing his duties. Due to his efficiency and loyalty his status was elevated and he was appointed as Naib (Assistant) incharge of artillery. In 1814, after the death of Mian Ghaus Khan, Misr Diwan Chand was appointed on his post by the *Maharaja* as a Chief of artillery

49 Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 6.

50 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 138; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p. 533.

51 J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, (Trans. and ed.) *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, p. 101.

52 N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 175.

53 G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State 1799-1839*, p. 109; Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, Jalandhar, 1949, pp. 14, 49.

54 Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-V, New Delhi, 1999, p. 332.

or ordnance department.⁵⁵ It was a good opportunity for him to prove his ability and sincerity to the *Maharaja*.

Between 1814 to 1825, Misr Diwan Chand was the officer on whom Ranjit Singh largely depended for the success of his military operations. In 1817, he was sent to deal with Mitha Tiwana. Misr Diwan Chand is famous in history as the victor of Multan (1818)⁵⁶ and Kashmir (1819).⁵⁷ He was also instrumental in reducing and capturing the fort of Bhakkar, Khangarh, leiah, Manjgarh and Mankera in 1821.

Misr Diwan Chand was also appointed Governor of Kashmir during 1819. His administration of Pakhli and Damtaur was not however, successful.

The *Dogra* brothers were greatly patronised by Misr Diwan Chand. He was not only instrumental in the appointment of Dhian Singh as Chamberlain in 1818⁵⁸, but also due to his aid and support, the wily brothers obtained the grant of Jammu in 1814 by dispossessing Jamadar Khushal Singh of it.⁵⁹

Misr Diwan Chand died broken hearted on 19th July 1825 after a two day illness from an attack of colic.⁶⁰ According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, the *Maharaja*, in need of money, ordered the auditors to check the accounts of the farmers of various districts for revenue. They engaged themselves in the process and unjustly showed a large amount

55 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 164; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p.81; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 124.

56 Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 31; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p. 519.

57 Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 178; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p.4; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p. 527.

58 Jamadar Khushal Singh quarreled with Misr Diwan Chand, whom he stopped at the *Deorhi* and refused admission. This so incensed the *Maharaja*, that he relieved him of the post and refused admittance to the court. Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, Patiala, 1987 (reprint), p. 42; According to S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 414. The *Maharaja* also fined him 50,000 rupees.

59 Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, Calcutta, 1847, p. 254.

60 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 395; Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashta-i-Punjab*, MS, M/790, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Punjabi Trans. p. 162. But according to N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 176. He died of Colera; According to Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-I-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881, (Punjabi Trans) Jeet Singh Seetal, 1968, p. 298, Diwan Chand died at Lahore of a stroke of paralysis.

outstanding to be payable by them. As the farmers had taken the farm through the good offices of the *Misr*, they approached him. The *Misr* represented to the *Maharaja* for justice and appealed for the realization of money justly payable by them. The *Maharaja* made a curt remark about his rise from a pimp to a high rank on account of his kindness and enjoined upon him not to neglect his duties and thus cause loss of revenue to the Government. This outburst of rage hurt the feelings of the *Misr*, who died within two days as a result of this insult.⁶¹

The *Maharaja* had great regard for the *Misr*. Once the *Maharaja* bought a costly *hukkah* for the *Misr* and also gave him the permission to smoke.⁶² On his death Maharaja Ranjit Singh was deeply grieved and said, "Misr was a unique personality of the age and had no equal or parallel in sincerity."⁶³ At the time of the *Misr's* death his wealth was estimated to comprise eleven lakhs in cash, ten necklaces of Pearls, two lakhs worth of ornaments and four to five lakhs worth of sundry goods.⁶⁴ He was an able general, an excellent commander and a gifted man. His brother Sukhdial succeeded him after his death.

DIWAN DINA NATH (RAJA)

Dina Nath was a civil administrator and councillor of considerable influence at the Sikh court for well over three decades. Shahamat Ali observes, "He is a shrewd, sensible man and possessed great statistical and financial information regarding every part of the Punjab".⁶⁵ The family of Raja Dina Nath came originally from Kashmir, where in the reign of Shah Jahan (the Mughal King), some members of it held offices

61 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p. 558.

62 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 115.

63 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 394.

64 Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, p. 63.

65 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 19.

about the court.⁶⁶ He was the son of Bakhat Mal, a Kashmiri *Brahmin* who had served under Perron, the Maratha Deputy at Delhi.⁶⁷ In 1815, Diwan Ganga Ram, a near relative of Dina Nath and head of the state office at Lahore invited him to Punjab and placed him in that office.⁶⁸ He worked with intelligence and diligence. Dina Nath because of his intelligence and business like approach soon attracted the attention of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He first attracted the notice of the *Maharaja* after the capture of Multan when he made out the lists of those entitled to rewards with great rapidity and clearness and adjusted the accounts of the province of Multan, which the first *Nazim*, Sukhdayal had thrown into great confusion.⁶⁹

Dina Nath by his ability and political acumen, rose to the highest position of power and influence in the affairs of the State. He exhibited energy and intelligence of an extraordinary kind. In 1826, on the death of Diwan Ganga Ram, Dina Nath succeeded him as the keeper of the Royal seal and head of Military accounts department. In 1834, on the death of Diwan Bhawani Das, he was made head of the finance department.⁷⁰ Thus, he became finance minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and was in charge of twelve *daftars* or offices of civil and military business of the Lahore Government towards the end of the *Maharaja's* reign and possessed great influence during the latter years of his life. The title of *Diwan* was bestowed upon him in 1838. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had great faith in the ability judgement of the *Diwan* and consulted him on all important occasions. According to Shahamat Ali, he received twenty rupees a day, besides a *Jagir* of six thousand rupees, and enjoyed

66 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

67 B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Hoshiarpur, 1977, p. 256; According to Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, 1995, p. 585. Dina Nath born in 1795.

68 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 80.

69 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 137.

70 Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 380.

assignments in Kashmir and Multan, besides many other fees and emoluments which he readily derived from his official stations.⁷¹

Besides this he received *Jagirs* in Amritsar, Dinanagar, and Kasur districts to the value of Rs. 9,900.⁷² The result was that Diwan Dina Nath known for his sobriety had a platoon of forty rose-limbed concubines with whom he played in the tank of his garden filled actually with rose water.⁷³ The Diwan's garden was considered a model of beauty, elegance and splendor. It was adorned with reservoirs of water, tanks splendid summer houses and buildings for the accommodation of visitors.

During the reign of Maharaja Kharak Singh and Sher Singh Diwan Dina Nath retained his office and received new *Jagirs*.⁷⁴ In the uncertain struggle between Mai Chand Kaur and Kanwar Sher Singh, he was the only person who stood aside.⁷⁵ Diwan Dina Nath retained his influential position during the fatal and inept *wazart* of Hira Singh who relied on the counsels of Pandit Jalla, a detractor of Diwan Dina Nath. The differences of Gulab Singh with Hira Singh also did not affect his position.⁷⁶

Dina Nath was also the founder and leader of the *Mutsaddi* faction which comprised the moderate old-guard of Ranjit Singh's time. He was one of the most trusted officials of Rani Jindan whom he resembled in several respects. Both survived all stages of revolutions and crises in which kings rose and fell and most of the prominent statesman perished. He was the member of Council of Ministers reconstituted by Rani Jindan on 28 December, 1844.⁷⁷

71 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 20.

72 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 137.

73 Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-V, p. 333.

74 *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, 31 Dec. 1847, No. 2225-2230, NAI.

75 B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, Hoshiarpur, 1969, p. 104.

76 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV, (Part-II), p. 275.

77 Hugh Pearse (ed.), *Memories of Alexander Gardner*, Patiala, 1898 (reprint), p. 263.

After the first Anglo-Sikh War, Diwan Dina Nath was one of the signatories of the treaty of 9th March 1846.⁷⁸ He also played an important part in the Council of Regency. On account of his services in the council, in November 1847, the *Diwan* was raised to the stature of *Raja* of Kalanaur with a *Jagir* worth 2,000 rupees annually.⁷⁹

After the annexation of the Punjab, Raja Dina Nath confirmed all his *Jagirs*. His eldest son Amarnath received a *Jagir* during his father's life worth Rs. 4,000 and on Amarnath's death his pension was resumed and his son received a *Jagir* of Rs. 4,000 retain in perpetuity according to the rules of primogeniture.

Griffin calls him, "*The Talleyrand of the Punjab* and his life and character bear a strong resemblance to those of the European statesman. Revolutions, in which his friends and patrons perished passed him by; dynasties rose and fell, but never involved him in their ruin; in the midst of turmoil when confiscation and judicial robbery were the rule of the state, his wealth and power continually increased. His sagacity and farsightedness were such that when, to other eyes, political sky was clear he could perceive the coming storm, which warned him to desert a losing party or a falling friend".⁸⁰ In conversation with the Europeans he expressed himself with boldness which was unusual among most of the Asiatics.⁸¹

MISR BELI RAM

78 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p.629; Document No. 26, Punjab Government Record, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

79 *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, 31 December 1847; No. 185, NAI; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 55.

80 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 135.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

Misr Beli Ram was a *Brahmin* by caste and belonged to the village named Kahan near Kitas in Jhelum.⁸² His father Misr Diwan Chand came to Lahore along with his sons in 1809. Misr Beli Ram and his four brothers, Rup Lal, Ram Kishan, Megh Raj and Sukh Raj got employment with the Lahore *Darbar* and commanded the confidence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with the help of Basti Ram a treasurer of the *Maharaja*. Misr Beli Ram entered the service of the *Maharaja* at the age of eleven through his grand uncle Basti Ram as assistant to him in the treasury. He soon became a great favourite of the *Maharaja* and on the death of Basti Ram in 1816, inspite of the opposition of Dhian Singh he was appointed his successor as *Thoshakhana*⁸³ or treasurer at the age of 19. *Dogra* brothers who constituted a group were against Misr Beli Ram and his brothers. Raja Dhian Singh wanted his replacement by his protege Misr Jassa.⁸⁴ This was the cause of the enmity between them.

In 1837, a dispute arose between Sardar Lehana Singh Majithia and Misr Beli Ram regarding the country of the Jalandhar Doaba. Bhai Gobind Ram explained the whole situation to the *Maharaja* as a piece of good service of Misr Beli Ram with many words about the faithfulness loyalty, sacrifice and well-wishing of the *Misr*.⁸⁵ Bhai Gobind Ram's words always left an indelible mark on the mind of the *Maharaja*. The *Maharaja* gifted/presented Misr Rup Lal who was the cause of the dispute between Majithia and Misr Beli Ram, an elephant, a *Doshala* and a sword and he was allowed to leave for Jalandhar.

82 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 19; J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (Trans. and ed.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, p. 47; He is native of Mauza Dilwal in Jhelum; According to Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families Note in the Punjab*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1940, p. 361.

83 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, pp. 93-94.

84 Debi Prashad, *Tarikh-i-Gulshan-i-Punjab*, Lukhnow, 1872, (Punjabi Trans.) Harminder Singh Kohli, Patiala, 2003, p. 94.

85 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III (Part-III), p. 351.

Misr brothers served their master with loyalty and efficiency. The family held a *Jagir* of 60,000 rupees and the farmed districts worth 2,00,000 rupees annually.⁸⁶ He remained in possession of this Jagir till after the death of the *Maharaja*.

After Ranjit Singh's death Nau Nihan Singh became displeased with him for having supported Kharak Singh's favourite Chet Singh and kept him in prison for three months.⁸⁷ Maharaja Sher Singh, however, restored the *Misr* to his old position of *Toshakhana*. After Sher Singh's murder Beli Ram was again imprisoned in September 1843.⁸⁸ Infact, in domestic politics and court intrigues the *Misr* was arrayed against the Jammu Brothers.⁸⁹ He died on 16 September 1843 and was succeeded by his brother Megh Raj as the Chief *Toshakhania*. Misr Beli Ram had three sons viz; Ram Das, Thakur Das and Khurram Rai. According to Griffin, "The sons of Beli Ram, who escaped to Ludhiana at the time of their father's arrest remained under British protection till 1845 when they returned to Punjab."⁹⁰ Of all his brothers Beli Ram is considered the most sensible. Shahamat Ali observes "he is an intelligent and amiable man, but from the high favour he enjoys, he is much envied about the court and had many little differences with the Sardars, who tried to injure him; but as the *Maharaja* is aware of his worth and devotion to his interests, their enmity is harmless".⁹¹ He was considered one of the notable chiefs of the Lahore *Darbar*.

MISR RUP LAL

86 B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, p. 267.

87 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV, (Part-I), (Eng. Trans.) V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1974, pp. 67, 95.

88 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV, (Part-III), p. 259; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 229.

89 N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 184; Bhagat Singh, "Court and Courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, October 1980, Vol-XIV(Part-II), p. 100.

90 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 363.

91 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 19.

Misr Rup Lal like his brother Misr Beli Ram, joined the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as an assistant in the *Toshakhana* or treasury under Misr Basti Ram in 1809. In 1832 he earned prominence as an efficient administrator when he was appointed *Nazim* of Jalandhar Doab after the removal of Shaikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din who was an oppressive *Nazim*.⁹² He brought great prosperity to *Doaba Bist Jalandhar*.⁹³ He was a conscientious and popular administrator with an instinctive abhorrence for oppression.⁹⁴ He took special interest in the prosperity of the territory under him. He made the assessment light and relieved people of heavy taxation. He was an upright and a just man whom people remembered long after him with affection and respect. The *Maharaja* directed Misr Rup Lal to confiscate the property of Shaikh Gulam Mohi-ud-Din at Hoshiarpur.⁹⁵ The *Misr* held this post till 1839.

After the death of Ranjit Singh he became the victim of the Lahore Darbar and was replaced by Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din. He was imprisoned by Prince Nau Nihal Singh⁹⁶ and was later released at Maharaja Kharak Singh's intercession.⁹⁷ Maharaja Sher Singh, appointed Rup Lal Governor of Kalanaur and the lands of the Lahore *Darbar*, south of the Sutlej, with orders to resume the fort and domains of Bhatpur from Jamadar Khushal Singh. When Hira Singh Dogra succeeded his father, Raja Dhian Singh, as minister, he immediately ordered the arrest of Misr Rup Lal in September 1843. He remained in confinement till the death of

92 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, pp. 173-74.

93 *Ibid.*, Daftar III (Part-II), p. 164.

94 G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State 1799-1839*, p. 109.

95 When Kanwar Sher Singh was appointed Governor of Kashmir, Gulam Mohi-ud-Din was appointed the agent and lieutenant of Prince Sher Singh. The Prince knew little of business and the *Shaikh* acquired more wealth than ever, which he used more ruthlessly than before. The people cried out bitterly against his oppression and to add to their distress, In 1832 Kashmir was visited by famine. The *Shaikh* was recalled to Lahore and fined. He protested against the amount of the fine, which he said he could never pay. Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 158.

96 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV, (Part-I), p. 39.

97 *Foreign Department: Secret Consultations*, 15 March, 1840, No. 40, NAI.

Raja Hira Singh in December 1844. Soon after that the new minister Sardar Jawahir Singh, not only released him, but also made Misr Rup Lal Governor of Jasrota. He was at Jasrota in 1846 when that country was made over to Raja Gulab Singh Dogra by the treaty of Amritsar dated 16th March, 1846. He lived up to 80 years of age and died at this native place Dalwal in September 1864.

DIWAN SAWAN MAL

Sawan Mal governor of Multan from 1821 to 1844, was a *Khatiri* of Chopra sub-caste from Akalgarh in Gujranwala district.⁹⁸ He was born in 1788.⁹⁹ His father Hoshnak Rai was a servant of Sardar Dal Singh Akalgarh.¹⁰⁰ Sawan Mal was youngest of three brothers. He commenced his public career in the office of his brother Nanak Chand who worked with Diwan Mohkam Chand. In 1820 he joined as the head of the account office under Governor Bhaiya Badan Hazari at a salary of Rs. 250 per month at Multan.¹⁰¹ In a very short time he set right the Multan finance which were in an almost inextricable confusion. Badan Hazari could not handle the province. He failed to render an account and was dismissed soon after. Sawan Mal who had already attracted the attention of the *Maharaja* was promoted in his stead. A good scholar of Persian and Arabic he won the appreciation of the *Maharaja* for his intelligence and administrative skills and quickly rose to higher positions.

A new era dawned in 1821 when Diwan Sawal Mal was appointed as *Kardar* of the half province of Multan by Ranjit Singh. In 1829 he was

98 J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (trans and ed.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, p. 107; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 392; *District and States Gazetteer of undivided Punjab* Vol-I, Gujranwala District, Delhi, p. 22; Masson Chalmers, *Narrative of various Journeys in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab*, Vol. I, Karachi, 1974, p. 397 writes that Sawan Mal was a *Brahmin* which is not true.

99 Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, p. 268; 'Court and Courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh', p. 101.

100 Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 171; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 90.

101 Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 348.

made the governor of the whole¹⁰² and remained in this post till 1844. He was conferred the title of *Diwan* in December 1832¹⁰³ within a short period he changed the whole appearance of Multan by introducing agricultural reforms of far reaching consequences.

Diwan Sawan Mal administered justice firmly and impartially. He devoted all his energies to the improvement of his charge and its recovery from the decay into which it had fallen owing to the wars and tumults of late years. Diwan Sawan Mal's justice was renowned for its even handedness. He was a very sympathetic and benevolent administrator. Ranjit Singh was always pleased with Sawan Mal's service to the people.¹⁰⁴ But the *Dogra* brothers were jealous of his popularity and had feelings of bitter hatred for him.

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh he had to deal with the intrigues of the *Dogra* brothers. He died on 29th September, 1844.¹⁰⁵ Thus perished the wisest and best of all Sikh governors. He continued in office till his last breath.¹⁰⁶ He was a wise, honest and a merciful man.¹⁰⁷

Diwan Sawan Mal left an enormous sum of seventy lakhs of rupees, amassed by the old *Diwan* during twenty three years of unblemished government service. His bequest was divided among his sons. He left behind six sons.¹⁰⁸ During his life time, the *Diwan* had assigned the administration of some of the territories of Multan to his two sons. The eldest Mulraj ruled Shujabad and Jhang while Karam Narain was made incharge of Laih. It was a common saying amongst the people that while Multan had been blessed with monsoon showers *Sawan* (the summer rain) and Leigh with *Karam* (kindness), Jhang got

102 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, pp, 461, 496.

103 *Ibid*, Daftar III (Part-II), p. 206.

104 Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 381.

105 *Foreign Department : Secret Consultation*; 26 October 1844, No. 90, NAI.

106 Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 381; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 90.

107 *Calcutta Review*, Vol-I, May-December 1844-45, London, 1881, p.444.

108 Ram Das, Diwan Mulraj, Karam Naryan, Sham Singh, Ram Singh and Narayan Singh.

only *Mula* (which eats the roots of the corn). Diwan Sawan Mal was succeeded as the governor of Multan by his son Mulraj. Diwan Sawan Mal could wield pen and sword equally well and it was a matter of great credit to him.

DIWAN BHAWANI DAS

Bhawani Das was a *Khatiri* and the second son of Thakar Das. He joined the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809.¹⁰⁹ The Diwan himself, his father and his grandfather had held the very important post of *Diwan* or revenue minister under the Kabul Government.¹¹⁰ He was popularly known as *Kubba* or hunch-backed. In the Kabul Government, Diwan Bhawani Das was employed chiefly for collecting the customs of Multan and Derajat. In 1808 he came from Kabul to collect revenue from Multan province and Derajat. On some account Shah Shuja got annoyed with him.¹¹¹ Since he had come away he availed himself of this opportunity to try and obtain service with Ranjit Singh. Diwan Bhawani Das was well received by the *Maharaja* who was already looking for a person of ability with a reputation of a competent financier, to keep his accounts. Diwan Bhawani Das presented himself before the *Maharaja* with a *Nazrana* of one thousand rupees and some presents.¹¹²

The *Maharaja* appointed him to the position of *Bakshi*¹¹³ and also *Wazir-i-Mal*.¹¹⁴ Before his joining as a *Wazir-i-Mal*, there was no state treasury or regular system of accounts at Lahore. Diwan Bhawani Das established a regular treasury and organized different departments to deal with various items of income and expenditure.

109 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 74.

110 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 81.

111 Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 311.

112 Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashat-i-Punjab*, MS M/790, Punjab State Archives, Patiala (Punjabi Trans) Amarwant Singh, p. 63.

113 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 85.

114 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* p. 81. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 53; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 311.

From 1810 to 1818, moreover, he was often sent to newly conquered places to re-organize the work of revenue assessment and collection. The military services of the *Diwan* were also considerable. He took part in the siege of Multan, Kashmir, Jammu and Attock.

Diwan Bhawani Das was generally put on the committees appointed to receive foreign dignitaries. When Shah Zaman visited Punjab, Diwan Bhawani Das along with Devi Das were appointed to welcome him. He was sent to meet the Governor General in 1814 to strengthen the friendship between the *Maharaja* and the British.¹¹⁵

In 1810 Diwan Mokham Chand and Diwan Bhawani Das's relationship got strained when the latter examined the accounts of the former.¹¹⁶ In 1816, he was made the *Diwan* of Kanwar Kharak Singh.¹¹⁷ In 1817, being disgusted with the conduct of affairs by the Prince, the *Diwan* left the assignment and began to engage himself in the work of the *Maharaja*.¹¹⁸ "But although the appointments filled by Diwan Bhawani Das were many and lucrative", writes Griffin, "his Chief work was as head of the Finance Department".¹¹⁹ For a time he lost the favour of the master on account of his differences with Misr Beli Ram by whom he was accused of misappropriation of funds. Ranjit Singh angrily struck the *Diwan* with his sheathed sword and fined him a lakh of rupees. He was sent to hills but on account of his invaluable services was recalled after a

115 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, pp. 119, 199, 301.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 103; Diwan Mohkam Chand submitted the papers of the collections made from the country of the Nakkais to the Maharaja and received the order that in the first place all the accounts of the income and expenditure regarding the country of Nakkais must be explained carefully to Diwan Bhawani Das and that income and expenditure of the mountainous regions must be investigated in the best possible way by Mohkam Chand from Diwan Bhawani Das and a report submitted to the *Maharaja*. Accordingly, Diwan Bhawani Das made Diwan Mohkam Chand understand satisfactorily all the papers relating to the extortion of money from the mountainous regions. After that Bhawani Das prepared a list of the collections from the territory of the Nakkais and submitted the same to the *Maharaja*. At the time of checking and auditing hot words passed between the two *Diwans*; but with a view to save them from unnecessary discouragement the matter was not pursued any further.

117 Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 28.

118 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 231.

119 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 288.

few months. He accordingly reappointed him to his former position which he occupied till his death in 1834.¹²⁰

DIWAN GANGA RAM

The family of Diwan Ganga Ram was of the *Brahmin* caste, and originally his ancestors hailed from Kashmir.¹²¹ Ganga Ram was born in 1775, at Rampur near Banaras. His family emigrated to Delhi in the middle of the eighteenth century. His father Pandit Kishan Das had held a lucrative post under the Mughals. He joined the service of the *Maharaja* of Gwalior and was placed with Colonel Louis Burquien, one of the French officers in Sindia's service. The young-man distinguished himself by his honesty and ability and he was entrusted with many important political assignments. In 1803 Burquien was defeated by Lord Lake and Ganga Ram retired to Delhi and remained there till 1813. He was of great assistance to General Octorlony when, in 1809, that officer was busy setting the relations between the Cis-Sutlej States and the British Government his knowledge of their past, political history, their treaties and their relations with other states was of immense help to the General. Ganga Ram was introduced to the *Maharaja* by Bhai Lal Singh and Himmat Singh Jalwasia. Maharaja Ranjit Singh who had heard of his ability invited him to Lahore in March 1813¹²² and put him in the military office¹²³ and made him the keeper of the royal seal.¹²⁴ Then he was made one of the pay master-in-chief of the irregular forces. Ganga Ram rose in *Maharaja's* favour very rapidly.¹²⁵ He brought many of his relatives and friends from Delhi and other parts of India and gave them

120 Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 338.

121 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 90.

122 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* Daftar II, p. 143; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 78.

123 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* Daftar II, p. 143; Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, Lahore, 1927, p. 42.

124 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 164.

125 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, pp. 92-93.

jobs in the Lahore government.¹²⁶ Important among them were Raja Dina Nath, Pandit Daya Ram and Pandit Hari Ram. He died in 1825.¹²⁷ Diwan Ganga Ram was one of the few men of great integrity and administrative ability in the court of Lahore.

Diwan Ajodhia Prashad

Diwan Ajodhia Prashad born in 1799, was an adopted son of Diwan Ganga Ram. Ganga Ram had no son born to him, so he adopted his wife's nephew Ajodhia Prasad. Diwan Ajodhia Prashad and Diwan Dina Nath were cousins, their mothers being real sisters. He came to Lahore in 1814, when he was 15 years of age. He studied in Lahore for two years and then was sent to Kashmir, where he was placed in the military office, on a salary of 1000 rupees per annum.¹²⁸ In 1819, he was placed under Ventura and Allard as paymaster of the troops and as a medium of communication between the commanding officers and the *Maharaja*.¹²⁹

After the death of his father in 1825 the *Maharaja* appointed him in charge of the office for regular troops and artillery. He being on very good terms with the French officers begged to be allowed to remain on his original appointment.¹³⁰ As a result of his refusal, the vacant post was given to Tej Singh. Ajodhia Prasad was given the title of *Diwan*¹³¹ and the *Jagir* of Nain Sukh and continued to serve with *Fauj-i-Khas*.¹³²

In 1831, Diwan Ajodhia Prashad was sent to Multan to receive Alexander Burnes, who was carrying with him the presents for the *Maharaja* from the King of England and remained attached to him till his

126 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 91.

127 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 170; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 361.

128 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 124.

129 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* Daftar II, p. 203.

130 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 125.

131 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* p. 170.

132 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 125.

arrival at Lahore.¹³³ After Ranjit Singh's death, he served under Kharak Singh and Sher Singh. After the retirement of Ventura Ajodhia Prasad himself held the command of the French Brigade. After the treaty of March 1846, he was appointed commissioner along with Captain Abbot to determine the boundary line of the Lahore *Darbar* and Jammu territories.¹³⁴ A man of versatile intellect, Ajodhia Prashad was by all accounts eminently successful in performing all kinds of duties, administrative, judicial, military and diplomatic.¹³⁵ Ajodhia Prashad was appointed to take charge of the young Maharaja Dalip Singh in conjunction with Dr. Login.¹³⁶ He always demonstrated an upright and honourable conduct. He was a man of considerable learning. He died in 1870.

Other Hindu Courtiers and Officials at Lahore *Darbar*:

There were a few more Hindu Courtiers and Officials in the Lahore *Darbar* who served under Maharaja Ranjit Singh till his death in 1839 and as also under his successors. Those courtiers and officials were employed in different capacities but almost invariably held positions of some importance. All of them were sincere to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It will be meaningful if we discuss some of them under separate heads.

DIWAN DEVI DAS

Devi Das was the elder brother of Diwan Bhawani Das. In 1809, he joined the service of the *Maharaja*¹³⁷ and contributed in the task of revenue and financial organization. He had earlier served under the rulers of Kabul and was in reality an agent of Wazir Sher Mohammad

133 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* Daftar III (Part-I), p. 3; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-I-Punjab*, p. 305.

134 *Journal and Dairies of the Assistants to the Agent, Government General, North-West Frontier and Regident at Lahore*, 1846-1849, Vol.III-IV, Allahabad, 1911, p.3.

135 G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State 1799-1839*, p. 107.

136 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-V, (Eng. Trans.) V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1974, pp. 174-75.

137 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 287.

Khan Bamizai, son of Wazir Shah Wali Khan¹³⁸, who was minister of Ahmed Shah Durrani. At the time of the death of his master, Devi Das was on a mission to the Nawab of Mankera for the realization of revenue payable. In his absence, Shah Shuja had emerged victorious and would not spare him.¹³⁹ He wrote a letter to the Nawab of Mankera to apprehend Devi Das. The Nawab acted accordingly. Devi Das reached Lahore and joined the service of Ranjit Singh.¹⁴⁰ The *Maharaja* appointed him in the finance department with his brother. Both the brothers Devi Das and Bhawani Das planned the system of farming the Privy seal and established a finance office for the State.

Devi Das has been described as a man of ability and far greater integrity than his brother. He did not, however, become so prominent in the council of his master because of his gentle and retiring disposition.¹⁴¹ Both the brothers worked together and always got on well. They always acted in concert as is evident from the news from the *Deorhi* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh dated 6th February, 1816. On that day, Hakim Ruhulla Khan accused Munshi Devi Das of taking bribes from everybody. The *Munshi* who was present there repudiated the accusation by saying he had obtained everything through the blessing and glory of his master. Diwan Bhawani Das requested the *Maharaja* to forbid Hakim Ruhulla Khan from quarrelling with everybody. The *Maharaja* replied that he would be asked to abstain.¹⁴²

A number of confidential duties were assigned to Devi Das by the *Maharaja*. He was also entrusted with military duties. In 1823, he was appointed to receive and escort Nawab Shah Nawaz Khan and the *Vakils*

138 Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 312.

139 Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *Parties and Politics at the Sikh court 1799-1849.*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 38.

140 Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashat-i-Punjab*, p. 64.

141 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, pp. 287-88.

142 H.L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra (eds), *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh (1810-1817)*, Monograph No. 17, Punjab Government Records Office, Patiala, 1935 (reprint), p. 230.

from Hyderabad to Lahore.¹⁴³ This shows that the *Maharaja* had great regard for Devi Das. Once when Diwan Devi Das was upset due to the misbehaviour of the trainers of horses and he was not ready to appear in the *Darbar*, Ranjit Singh, himself went to him and taking his hand in his own hand, brought him inside the fort and told him to present his demands before him in the court.¹⁴⁴

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti Devi Das, who was incharge of Finance office and the farmer of Privy seal was never a defaulter in the payment of revenue and regularly paid the money to the banker. However, when, in 1825, the *Maharaja* ordered the auditors of the finance office to audit his accounts, the auditor reported that a large amount was payable by him. Devi Das prayed for justice, and pleaded innocence but his request was not acceded to. He was ordered to be kept in strict confinement. The custodians, who were under obligation, did not keep surveillance over him. He was allowed to visit the Palki of a saint, who was greatly respected and was given rupees twenty daily for maintenance from the *Toshakhana* by the *Maharaja*. The custodians were severely punished for this lapse of duty. One day the *Maharaja* visited the saint, the latter dwelling upon the qualities of justice handed over Devi Das to the *Maharaja* in order to mete out justice to him. The *Maharaja* swore by religion before the saint and caught the hand of the *Diwan* from him. The *Diwan* went to his house happily. On the other day, an official of the *Maharaja* waited on him in order to realise the money but the latter offered excuses. Devi Das was imprisoned and brought to the official's dwelling place. He began to beat him with a stick and his

143 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 384.

144 *Ibid*, pp. 399-400.

beard was brunt. Finally, the *Diwan* was unable to pay the money. Hence he died in prison.¹⁴⁵

145 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 558; According to G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State 1799-1839*, p. 105. Devi Das died in 1830.

LALA KARAM CHAND

Lala Karam Chand was one of the important *Munshis* of Ranjit Singh.¹⁴⁶ His forefathers had held administrative positions at the court of the Mughals. When the *Sikhs* rose to power, Jawala Nath, his father entered the service of Sardar Charat Singh Shukarchakia as a *Munshi* and remained with him and his son, Mahan Singh, till his death. Karam Chand was first employed by Bishan Singh Kalal, one of the confidential agents of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.¹⁴⁷ After the Sardar's retirement to Banaras, he entered Ranjit Singh's service and in the due course of time was promoted to the office of trust. He accompanied the *Maharaja* on his secret visit to Hardwar in 1805.¹⁴⁸ In 1808, the seal of the *Maharaja* was given to him. He was employed as an agent of the *Maharaja* in the negotiations concluded between the *Maharaja* and the Sikh Chiefs of Cis-Sutlej States. His name is also associated with the drawing up of the articles of the Anglo-Sikh treaty of 1809. He later worked with Diwan Bhawani Das as his subordinate. He accompanied Bhawani Das to Shah Shuja to pay his one thousand rupees sent by Ranjit Singh for his expenditure and to recover from him the *Kohi-i-Noor* diamond as promised by his wife.¹⁴⁹ He was a trusted fellow of Ranjit Singh and was associated by him in almost all tasks and matters of confidence. For the greater part of his career, he remained attached to the revenue department in which he was acknowledging expert. He died in 1836.

146 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, Lahore, 1927, p. 286.

147 Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashat-i-Punjab*, p. 64.

148 Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1940, p. 308.

149 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 161.

RATTAN CHAND DARHIWALA

Rattan Chand was also one of the courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was the third son of Lala Karam Chand and was a great favourite of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When he was quite a boy he used to be in constant attendance at court. He was styled *Darhiwala* or bearded man by the *Maharaja* to distinguish him from another courtier of the same name, Rattan Chand Duggal, who was younger to him by four years and at that time was without a beard. Once the *Maharaja* was holding a beard show and granted suitable rewards according to the length of their beards. Among the non-Sikhs Rattan Chand of Lahore won the first prizes.¹⁵⁰ He was already known as *Darhiwala*. He was in 1829 appointed to the postal department on Rs. 200 a month, with certain assignments related with the revenues of Peshawar and Hazara.¹⁵¹ He remained in this department during the reign of Ranjit Singh and his successors and he received Rs. 2,610 cash allowances and *Jagirs* in Dinanagar, Khanowal, Yuhianagar, Tiwan, Bhindan, Hazara and Peshawar, worth Rs. 13,600.¹⁵² The garden of Diwan Rattan Chand *Darhiwala* outside Shah Alami gate, was beautiful. It was furnished with the buildings, elegant reservoirs and fountains of water and luxuriant walks. After the first Anglo-Sikh War Rattan Chand was appointed postmaster - General in the Punjab. He died in 1872.

RATTAN CHAND DUGGAL

Rattan Chand Duggal was the son of Kanhiya Lal Duggal of Wazirabad.¹⁵³ He was a *Darbar Munshi* from 1831 to 1849. He alongwith his brother Shankar Das was in favour at court, and received *Jagirs*

150 Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-V, p. 544.

151 Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, p. 310.

152 *Foreign Department : Political Proceedings*, 3 April 1850, No. 194, NAI.

153 J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (Trans and ed.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, p. 94.

which in 1850 amounted to Rs. 10,000.¹⁵⁴ He was, when quite young, appointed incharge of *Maharaja's* private seal and held the office for several years. In February 1845, Rattan Chand Duggal accompanied Sardar Fateh Singh Mann, Sardar Sher Singh Attariwala and Baba Mian Singh Bedi's deputation sent to Jammu to negotiate settlement with Raja Gulab Singh, regarding claims of the Lahore *Darbar* on him.¹⁵⁵ During the second Anglo-Sikh war of 1848-49, he was suspected of being complacent against the English and his *Jagirs* were resumed with the exception of two gardens. These were released in perpetuity and he also received a life pension of Rs. 3,600. He died in 1857.

BAKSHI BHAGAT RAM

Bakshi Bhagat Ram is also known as Lala Bhagat Ram. He was the son of Baisakhi Ram a money changer in a very small way of business, in the city of Lahore.¹⁵⁶ He was first recruited as an assistant in 1818 in the treasury of Misr Beli Ram, the Chief of *Toshakhana* or treasure. He was 19 years old at that time and his pay was fixed at Rs. 60 per month. In 1824, he received the post of assistant writer of the accounts of the Privy Purse, with Rs. 50 per month as additional pay.¹⁵⁷ In 1832, he was appointed *Bakshi* or paymaster of the army. He held this appointment throughout the reign of Maharaja Kharak Singh. During the reign of Sher Singh he was considered a leader of the Punjabi secretariat party or *Munshi* or *Mutsaddi* party as they were popularly known.¹⁵⁸ He was one of the council members in the Council formed by Rani Jindan on 28

154 *Foreign Department : Political Proceedings*, 3 April 1850, No. 194 NAI; Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, p. 310.

155 Sita Ram Kohli, Khushwant Singh (ed.), *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, New Delhi, 1967, p. 92.

156 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 255.

157 *Ibid.*

158 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, p. 97; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, pp. 335-336.

December 1844.¹⁵⁹ In 1844-45, he was incharge of the regular army. In 1847, Mr. John Lawrence, directed Bakshi Bhagat Ram to render the army accounts, which he had not done for several years. When he failed to render the accounts, the *Jagirs* of Bhagat Ram were resumed. He died at Lahore in 1865.

MISR BASTI RAM

Misr Basti Ram *Brahmin* by sub caste was a holy man and charitable physician of Lahore as an auspicious beginning was given charge of the *Toshakhana*. Misr Basti Ram was uncle of Misr Diwan Chand father of Misr Beli Ram and was treasurer of Mahan Singh, father of Ranjit Singh¹⁶⁰ and continued his service under Ranjit Singh as well. On the conquest of Amritsar and Lahore, the *Maharaja* entrusted him with the charge of Amritsar.¹⁶¹ After some time, he was appointed chamberlain in charge of the *Deorhi*. Finding him absent from duty one night, he was removed from the post in 1811 and Jamadar Khushal Singh was promoted to his position.¹⁶² However, several Sardars came forward to recommend his case, but the *Maharaja* did not think it proper to reinstate him. Sohan Lal Suri gave a different reason. He mentions that the *Maharaja* dismissed Basti Ram because, "he showed great courage and daring in putting before the *Maharaja* the requests and petitions of all people."¹⁶³ The *Maharaja* strictly warned Jamadhar Khushal Singh that he, too, must fully understand every matter before showing courage in presenting the case of everybody. Misr Basti Ram was seized and confined but he was released after some days and restored to employment on paying a fine of Rs. 2000. He died in 1816.

159 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, p. 91.

160 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 596.

161 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 19.

162 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 105; Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 40.

163 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 105.

MISR RALLIA RAM (RAJA)

Misir Rallia Ram was the eldest son of Chhaju Mal, a *Brahman* of respectable family and an influential officer of Kanhiya Misal. He was a good scholar of Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian, Mathematics and Physical Sciences. In 1811, he was placed in charge of the Amritsar District¹⁶⁴ at the age of 16 and showed great initiative in the suppression of dacoity and highway robbery. Ranjit Singh was so pleased with his zeal, that he made him, in 1812, Chief of the department of customs.¹⁶⁵ Rallia Ram's energy and uprightness earned him many enemies at the court and due to their intrigues, he fell into disgrace and in 1830, he was fined rupees one lakh. In 1833, he was appointed keeper of records. In 1847, he was appointed *Kardar* of the district of Jhang.¹⁶⁶ In September 1847, all the affairs of the customs of the country were placed under the superintendence of the Misir Rallia Ram and his son Sahib Dayal. During the second Anglo-Sikh war of 1848-49 he remained loyal to the British which means that he was one of those *Hindus* who deliberately desisted from open opposition of the British. In 1849, both Rallia Ram and Sahib Dyal left the Punjab on a pilgrimage to the holy cities. Rallia Ram who had been made *Diwan* by the Sikh Government in 1847, was in 1851 (when he was still on pilgrimage) elevated to the position of a *Raja* by the British Government. He never returned to Punjab and died at Banaras in 1864. The Lahore Government had few servants as able as Rallia Ram and Sahib Dyal, and it certainly had none as honest. They were, in the last corrupt days of the administration, almost the only men, who fully supported it, and faithfully performed their duty. They possessed the wisdom to understand and support the enlightened policy of the British

164 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 47.

165 *Ibid.*

166 E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab 1874-1880*, Lahore, 1882, p. 39.

Resident, the only policy that could have saved the country from the evils that afterwards befell it.

MISR SAHIB DAYAL (RAJA)

Sahib Dyal was the second son of Misr Rallia Ram, born in 1801 and first entered the Sikh service as a *Munshi* in the customs department under his father.¹⁶⁷ He bore a high character for honesty and ability as did his father. In 1832, he was transferred to the office of the Paymaster of the regular army. In 1839, he was made chief of the customs of Jalandhar and held this post till the close of the First Anglo-Sikh war in 1846. In 1847, both the father and son received Persian titles of honour and the whole customs of the country were placed under their superintendence. In November 1848, he was selected by the Resident, to accompany the head-quarters camp of the British army on the part of the *Darbar*. He remained loyal to the British Government during the second Anglo-Sikh War. He left the Punjab along with his father Rallia Ram, and did not return till 1851. In 1851, he received the title of *Raja* by the British Government and settled down at Kishankot in Gurdaspur district, a town of which he may be said to have been the founder. He died at Amritsar in 1885. He was extremely honest and a very capable man.

167 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 47.

MISR MEGH RAJ (RAI BAHADUR)

Megh Raj was the son of Misr Diwan Chand, brother of Misr Beli Ram and Misr Rup Lal. When Misr Rup Lal and Misr Beli Ram joined the service as assistants in the treasury of the *Maharaja*, Misr Megh Raj received about the same time the charge of the treasury in the Gobindgarh fort at Amritsar.¹⁶⁸ He held this post during the remainder of the *Maharaja's* reign. He also with his brother became the victim of the intrigues of Dhian Singh Dogra. After the death of his brother, he succeeded him as the chief *Toshakhania*. After the first Anglo-Sikh War he was appointed treasurer to the Lahore *Darbar*. In 1849, he was appointed treasurer of the Lahore Division, a post which he held till his death on the 1 August, 1864.¹⁶⁹

MISR RAM KISHAN

Misr Ram Kishan, brother of Beli Ram entered the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1826 and was made chamberlain by Ranjit Singh and constantly, remained in attendance at the court. The *Maharaja* always treated him with special kindness. The *Misrs* and the *Rajas* had a differences which were scarcely healed. This started between *Raja* Dhian Singh and Misr Ram Kishan, on account of Misr Beli Ram having been stopped on his entrance at the *Deorhi* when he proceeded as usual to the *Darbar* and angry words were exchanged on either side. The audacity of stopping Misr Beli Ram was committed out of jealousy as Misr Beli Ram was more influential as the chief treasurer. This went so far that the *Raja* proposed to resign, but the officers of the court interposed and brought about a partial reconciliation.¹⁷⁰

In October 1937, a series of fresh differences burst out between Misr Ram Kishan and Raja Dhian Singh. Chanda Singh Deorhiwala

168 Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, p. 362.

169 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 365.

170 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 21.

submitted to Misr Ram Kishan verbally on behalf of Raja Dhian Singh the need for the demolition of a well in a certain territory. The *Misr* spoke harshly in reply. When Raja Dhian Singh heard about this, he grew angry and displeased and the matter reached the ears of the *Maharaja*, who expressed great displeasure to Misr Ram Kishan.¹⁷¹ The rebuff of Misr Ram Kishan had so greatly enraged the Raja and he had left for Jammu. Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered *Misr* Ram Kishan to follow the Raja Dhian Singh to Jammu and beg pardon from him for his faults and not to enter the court of the *Maharaja* until he had done so.¹⁷² Accordingly the *Misr* went to Jammu, presented himself to the Raja and prayed for pardon. Raja Dhian Singh accepted the apologies granted him pardon. Finally, on 21 October, 1837, Misr Ram Kishan presented himself before the *Maharaja* in the village of Badiana with a letter of satisfaction from Raja Dhian Singh.¹⁷³

Misr Ram Kishan *Kardar* of the district Gujranwala in 1839. He had to pay a lakh of rupees annually.¹⁷⁴ His administration was just and efficient.

However after the death of the *Maharaja* he faced the intrigues of the *Dogra* family and was put to death with his brother Misr Beli Ram on 16 September, 1843.¹⁷⁵

171 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III (Part-IV), p. 380.

172 *Ibid.*, pp. 381-82.

173 *Ibid.*, p. 382.

174 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

175 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* Daftar-IV (Part-III), p. 260; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 229.

MISR SUKHRAJ

Misr Sukhraj was the youngest among the *Misr* brothers. He was a brave and daring officer. He joined the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a petty officer and rose to be a commander of several battalions of infantry. In 1836, he was elevated to the position of a General by the *Maharaja* and was given separate division of his army.¹⁷⁶ During the reign of Maharaja Kharak Singh he continued his service for the Lahore *Darbar* but was imprisoned with his brothers due to the insidious intrigues of Dhian Singh and Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh. He died in 1842.

RAI KISHAN CHAND

Rai Kishan Chand was a Lahore agent, the youngest son of Rai Anand Singh Bhandari of Batala. In 1809, through the recommendation of Diwan Mohkam Chand, his father Anand Singh was appointed *Vakil* or agent of the Lahore court at Ludhiana, which had recently been occupied as a military station. Anand Singh was afterwards sent to Delhi, while his eldest son Govind Jass occupied his place at Ludhiana¹⁷⁷, his youngest son, Kishan Chand was made agent at Karnal and Ambala.¹⁷⁸ He was endowed with a *Jagir* of Rs. 15000 per annum in the Jalandhar district and one rupee per annum on each of the villages belonging to Lahore *Darbar* on the left bank of the Sutlej. The title of 'Rai' was granted to Kishan Chand by Prince Nau Nihal Singh in 1840.¹⁷⁹ He was an able politician and superior in every respect, being possessed of extraordinary tact and cunning with great presence of mind. He was a very able man, possessed of great capabilities and often styled by Englishmen as a genius, "sometimes more than a match for some of our British

176 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p.19.

177 W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 251.

178 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 269; Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashta-i-Punjab*, p. 170.

179 *Ibid.*, p. 270.

diplomats".¹⁸⁰ According to Bhai Ram Singh, "Lala Kishan Chand was a wise and intelligent person."¹⁸¹ Similarly his brother Gobind Ram observed that "Kishan Chand was endowed with good abilities and was an active person."¹⁸² He was a tactful politician, well aware of the successful means of scoring over the British by assuming mild and yielding manners. After the death of the *Maharaja*, Sher Singh bestowed on Rai Kishan Chand and his brother and son great influence and power. In 1839, he accompanied Colonel Wade on his political mission to Peshawar.

Rai Kishan Chand did his best to maintain a good understanding between the Lahore *Darbar* and the British Government and protested strongly against the first Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46 when it became imminent. At the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, his cash allowances were resumed. He died in 1872 at Banaras.

DIWAN HAKIM RAI

Diwan Hakim Rai was a *Khatri* of Sialkot and was born in 1803. The ancestors of Diwan Hakim Rai were in the service of the Kanhiya Chiefs. He was the son of Kashi Ram who was employed in the judicial office under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In 1824, he joined service with Ranjit Singh in the Charyari regiments. He was an able man, and rose quite rapidly to favour. In 1826, he was made incharge of the estates of the young Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh and received an allowance of 1 per cent on all collections from the districts under him¹⁸³. He was later given the title of *Diwan*. He attended the court in the company of his master Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh.¹⁸⁴ He took part in many expeditions. He was made the Governor of Bannu, Isa Khel, Dera Ismail Khan, Tonk and

180 W.L. Mc'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 251.

178 *Foreign Department: Secret Consultations*, 17 February, 1840, No. 30, NAI.

182 *Foreign Department: Secret Consultations*, 18 May, 1840, No. 230, NAI.

183 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 295.

184 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 19.

Kohat¹⁸⁵ and in 1836 he became the first Governor of the Northern-Western Frontier under the *Maharaja*. Maharaja Nau Nihal Singh appointed him Chief justice of Lahore. During the first Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46 and second Anglo-Sikh War of 1848-49, he was loyal to the Sikh Government. After annexation of the Punjab he was held prisoner. In July 1853, he was released and permitted to retire to Banaras.

GENERAL HARSUKH RAI

Harsukh Rai born in 1810, was son of Sardar Gurdit Singh Kapur, a *Khatiri* of Hafizabad in Gujranwala district. He went to Multan in 1833, and was made *adalati* or judge by Diwan Sawan Mal and soon afterwards received a military appointment.¹⁸⁶ At that time Diwan Sawan Mal was the Governor of that province. But he remained there for only two years, when failing to get leave, he threw up his appointment in disgust and came to Lahore where Maharaja Sher Singh made him *Kardar* of Shaikhupura on a salary of Rs. 1800 per annum and in 1841 he was appointed *Kardar* of Haweli near Pakpattan. When Raja Lal Singh came into power, he was made general of the newly created brigade and also made *Kardar* of Patti. Soon after the outbreak of revolt in Multan in 1848, Harsukh Rai was sent as per the desire of Colonel H. Lawrence, to the Majha as *Kardar* on Rs. 4310 per annum.¹⁸⁷ He died in 1867.

185 Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Delhi, 1967, p. 213.

186 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 220.

187 *Ibid.*

DIWAN DEVI SAHAI

Devi Sahai was son of Diwan Radha Krishan of Bhera, District Shahpur, who had died in Ranjit Singh's service in 1828 and, therefore, he received from the *Darbar* the appointment held by his father. He rose high in the service of the State. He took in several campaigns as commander both of the *Derah Pindiwala* and *ghorcharahs* regiments. In his military capacity, he went through the Multan and Afghan campaigns.¹⁸⁸ He was further employed on the frontier in realizing arrears of revenue and in administering justice. In 1837, he was sent to Bombay to acquire knowledge of the conditions and state of the province with special regard to its military and merchantile resources.¹⁸⁹ This mission was accomplished to the *Maharaja's* satisfaction, for he was presented a valuable *Khillat* and assigned a *Jagir* in Shahpur yielding about Rs. 20,000 per annum.¹⁹⁰ In 1846, he accompanied Raja Gulab Singh and Raja Dina Nath to Kasur, where the treaty which concluded the First Anglo-Sikh war was signed.¹⁹¹ In 1849, he joined Mulraj and was present through the siege of Multan. He fought the battle of Chillianwala also. After annexation his *Jagirs* were forfeited but he was given a compensation allowance of Rs. 240 per annum. He died in 1858.

DIWAN SHANKAR NATH

Diwan Shankar Nath was born in 1805 at Delhi. He originally belonged to Kashmir. His grandfather Ragunath Kaul worked with the *Maharaja* of Gwalior and became Mir *Munshi* of Colonel Louis Burqien, one of the French officers of Maratha army. Shankar Nath's father Hari Ram also worked with him. After the downfall of the Maratha power Hari Ram was invited to Lahore by a relative Diwan Ganga Ram and he joined

188 Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families Note in the Punjab*, p. 238.

189 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1919, p. 112.

190 Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families Note in the Punjab*, p. 238.

191 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, p. 112.

as a *Munshi* in Diwan Ganga Ram's office. Shankar Nath also came to Lahore alongwith his father Hari Ram in 1820 and was placed in Kanwar Kharak Singh's treasury office.¹⁹² After sometime he was transferred to the Central Record Office, in which he remained under the successors of the *Maharaja* till the annexation of the Punjab. He had much influence at the Lahore *Darbar* because he was married to the sister of Diwan Dina Nath.

MISR JASSA MAL

Jassa mal, son of Dhanpat, of the village of Dalval, in Jehlum district.¹⁹³ He was a poor *Brahmin* who ran a small shop in village Singhuran in Jehlum District. Having failed in business, he wandered with his wares as a peddler. By chance, he came into contact with Basti Ram, a treasurer of Ranjit Singh's father Mahan Singh and was appointed under him, on three rupees per month and his food.¹⁹⁴ Gradually, he rose to be an accountant under Mahan Singh after whose death, he returned to his village and reopened his shop. When Ranjit Singh became master of Lahore, Jassa Mal again employed by Basti Ram in 1809 as a clerk on five rupees per month.¹⁹⁵ On the death of Basti Ram in 1817-18, Dhian Singh's influence produced for him the appointment to the charge of the *Behla Thoshakhana*.¹⁹⁶ The following year he promoted *darogha* or custodian of the *Toshakhana*.¹⁹⁷ On the conquest of Kashmir in 1819, he became the treasurer of the new province. In 1832, he was given the contract for the revenues of Jehlum

192 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, pp. 253-254.

193 Harbans Singh, (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol-II, Patiala, 1996, p. 335.

194 Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 152; Debi Parshad, *Tarik-i-Gulshan-i-Punjab*, p. 94.

195 Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, p. 335.

196 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol-II, p. 306.

197 Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 153.

and Rohtas districts which he held till his death in 1836.¹⁹⁸ After his death his son Lal Singh appointed in his place as a treasure of *Behla Thoshakhana*.

SUKH DYAL

Sukh Dyal was also important Hindu courtier of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Jhang was given to Sukh Dayal for an amount to Rs. 4,00,000 and again in 1820 for Rs. 4,10,000. Sukh Dyal got the *Ijara* of the *sairat* for 13 lakh rupees and similarly, the *sairat* of Kashmir were given in *Ijara* in 1822. Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed Sukh Dayal the first Hindu *Nazim* or Governor of Multan.

Thus, it becomes clear that Maharaja Ranjit Singh employed many Hindu Courtiers and Officials at Lahore *Darbar* for many reasons. He wanted to expand and establish his Kingdom by consolidation and also used their services in civil administration. Probably, he wanted to infuse the spirit of competition, discipline and efficiency in other courtiers and officials at the Lahore *Darbar*, as he held that it would consolidate his position and he would be able to expand his Kingdom without much difficulty. By employing them he could also exhibit that the nature of his state was secular. The *Maharaja* made full use of the merits and caliber of these Hindu Courtiers and Officials as per his requirements. It will be worth mentioning that when these *Hindus* came into Maharaja Ranjit Singh's service some of them were unhappy and dissatisfied with their previous services. It is equally important that they could get any position though a clerk or a General on the basis of merit.

198 *Ibid*, Jassa Mal died in 1829.

CHAPTER-II

ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRAL SECRETARIAT

This chapter deals with the establishment of the Central Secretariat and the role of the Hindus for its institution. No doubt, the whole administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was based and dependent on this. Here, we consider why the *Maharaja* recruited only the Hindus in the Central Secretariat, their contribution and the nature of changes and improvements brought about by the Hindus like Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Dina Nath, Diwan Ganga Ram, Misr Beli Ram etc. Prior to a discussion on the establishment of the Central Secretariat, it is mandatory to know about the early conditions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's administration.

Soon after his ascension to the throne, Maharaja Ranjit Singh felt the need of a strong centralized State with well-defined political frontiers. He had a Central Secretariat, a council of ministers but no legislature. He was the fountain head and originator of all laws and regulations for administrative purposes. He remained constantly busy in war and diplomacy except that he devoted his attention equally to revenue collection. He availed himself of many sources of taxation including direct and indirect tax and tax upon land, houses, imports and exports. He was constrained to limit his endeavours to the maintenance of a workable system of administration rather than proactive legislation. According to Alexander Burnes, "In a territory compactly situated, he had applied himself to those improvements which spring only from great minds and here we find despotism without rigours, a despot without

cruelty and a system of Government far beyond the native institutions of the East though far from the civilization of Europe."¹⁹⁹

In the early stages of his career when Ranjit Singh was busy with the conquest and consolidation of his State he stuck to the conservative system of Government and introduced the necessary changes in stages. Earlier, there was no department of State, no accounts were kept and provincial governors, except for paying the stipulated amount, had a free hand in the settlement of revenue, Civil and Judicial administration. The departmental organization of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Secretariat and the institution of the various seals and the circumlocutory arrangements, in particular, will indicate the degree of perfection attained by the Sikh Government. The system of Government adopted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh may be described as a combination of the crude and highly irregular administrative practices prevalent amongst the Sikh *Misals* and those thought imperative by him.²⁰⁰

The evolution and growth of the *Daftars* and the machinery of Government at the centre was a gradual process. Till the conquest of Lahore in 1799, Ranjit Singh had no experience of the intricate art of finance or administration. During the *Misal* period, the constitution of the Government being straightforward and uncomplicated, there was no need of an elaborate Secretariat. The territories then were small and within easy reach and control. A few personal assistants like the *Diwan* (financial adviser), the *toshakhania* (treasurer) and a few *munshis* (clerks) were all that was necessary. Diwan Lakhpat Rai was the *Diwan* of Late Maha Singh, father of Ranjit Singh. When his father died, Ranjit Singh was only ten years old. His mother Sardarni Raj Kaur became regent during his minority and Diwan Lakhpat Rai assisted her constructively.

199 Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, Vol-I, London, 1834, p. 285.

200 B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Hoshiarpur, 1977, p. 289.

Diwan Lakhpat Rai continued in his post till Ranjit Singh attained the age of seventeen when he assumed the conduct of affairs of governance. Besides the *Diwanship*, there was the equally important post of the *toshakhania*. This post was held by Misr Basti Ram who had succeeded his father and grand-father in the office.²⁰¹ During the conquest of Amritsar and Lahore, the *Maharaja* entrusted him with the charge of Amritsar.²⁰² Misr Basti Ram was helped by Misr Jassa Mal as and when the necessity arose. He had also under him Gurmukh Singh, appointed in the year 1780²⁰³. Gurmukh Singh accompanied Ranjit Singh during the capture of Lahore in 1799 and was then pay-master of the forces and was made incharge of whatever booty the Shukherchakia Chief came to posses at Lahore. For several years, even after the occupation of Lahore, Ranjit Singh did not have enough leisure for the organization of his Civil Government. He remained constantly busy in war and diplomacy and collection of money.

Ranjit Singh kept his troops under his own management and command and appropriated the revenue of the territories as he willed. Ranjit Singh followed this pratice for a few years of his early rule, but as his territories grew extensively with his conquests, the problems of revenue, finance and administration also became complex. But the process of evolution of the *Daftars* was slow, as except for the province of Lahore and other centrally administered areas, the whole Kingdom was farmed out. This obviated the necessity of evolving a uniform and comprehensive machinery of Government for the collection of revenue which was allowed to vary from province to province.

201 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, Lahore, 1865, p. 596; Ganda Singh (ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, Patiala, 1970, p. 100.

202 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, New Delhi, 1986, p. 19.

203 *Ibid.*

Maharaja Ranjit Singh allowed the *Brahmins* and the *Khatris* virtually to monopolize appointments in the Central Secretariat (*Darbar-i-Mulla*) because the upper classes of the Hindu community had acquired over the centuries a high degree of proficiency in revenue administration and general Secretariat work.²⁰⁴ Hindus who constituted the Central Secretariat were Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Devi Das, Misr Basti Ram, Kirpa Ram Chopra, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Misr Beli Ram, Misr Jassa Mal, Misr Rallia Ram, Misr Sahib Dyal, Lala Kishan Chand, Rattan Chand Duggal, Rattan Chand *Darhiwala* and Shanker Das.

Earlier the accounts of his revenue receipts and expenditure were at first kept by Rama Nand Sahu, a banker of Amritsar²⁰⁵ who held the octroi of Amritsar and farmed out the work of the salt mines of Pind Dadan Khan. In 1805, Holker advised the *Maharaja* to organize a regular treasury. In the times of financial crises, as in 1808, the revenues of the State were mortgaged to the banker and advances secured to meet the civil and military expenditure.

The evolution of the *Daftars*, however, was a gradual process. G.L. Chopra mentions in *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume, A Sarishta-i-Diwani* came into being in 1805, under Kirpa Ram. In 1808, Diwan Bhawani Das became the head of the *Daftar* named after his name-the *Daftar-i-Bhawani Das*. He organized the fiscal system in the newly conquered territories. He was appointed Finance Minister in 1811. The same year a new *Daftar* entitled the *Sarishta-i-Daftar* was established to control general expenditure and income. Diwan Bhawani Das created a *Daftar-i-Maliyat*, which controlled the land revenue and all other sources of income (*Jama Kharch-i-Sairat*), tributes and presents

204 Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society under Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 112.

205 Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, Patiala, 2003(reprint), p.311; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.V, New Delhi, 1991, p. 356; Karam Singh Historian (ed.) *Bahumulle Ithasik Laikh*, Amritsar, 1991 (reprint), p.124.

(*nazranas*), escheats and forfeitures (*Zabti*), excise (*Abkari*), registration fees (*Wajuh-at-i-Moqarari*) and custom and excise duties (*Chaukiyat*). With the control of major sources of income, the *Daftar-i-Maliyat* branched out. When Ganga Ram joined the service, a military accounts department came into being and other *Daftars* to control the accounts of the royal household (*tauzihat*) and the *toshakhana* came into being and were placed under Misr Basti Ram. In 1821, the *Daftar-i-Shahzada* was created to keep accounts of the income and expenditure of the assignments and *jagirs* of the royal princes. Soon after, a *Daftar-i-Darogha* to look after the octroi, custom and excise duty receipts was established. A *Daftar-i-Roznamacha* established in 1816, recorded the daily credit and debit entries. Soon after the *Daftar-i-Moharyani* came into existence. Its function was to affix the royal seal and charge commissions on documents of payments. In 1822, the *Daftar-i-Mulla* or the Supreme Department was created to supervise the overall functioning of the financial administration.²⁰⁶

Diwan Bhawani Das joined the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1808.²⁰⁷ The *Diwan* himself, his father and his grandfather had held the very important post of *Diwan* or revenue minister under the Kabul Government.²⁰⁸ At Kabul he used Persian, Arabic and Turkish terms for various departments. The *Maharaja* appointed him to the position of *Bakshi*²⁰⁹ and also *Wazir-i-Mal*²¹⁰. Before the appointment of Diwan Bhawani Das, Ranjit Singh had no *Daftar* or regular system of accounts in the capital. The *Diwan* was the first to organize the offices. He also

206 Ganda Singh, (ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, pp. 102-107.

207 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, Lahore, 1928 (tr.) by Janak Singh, (ed.) by Kirpal Singh, Patiala, 1983, p. 40.

208 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 81.

209 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, Lahore 1885, 1889 (English Trans.), V.S. Suri, Amritsar, 2001, p. 85.

210 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.81.

supervised the pay office for troops as a finance office. Diwan Bhawani Das, established a regular treasury and organized different departments to deal with various items of income and expenditure.²¹¹ It is possible that he introduced the system of Kabul Government under which he formally served. Another officer closely connected with accounts was Diwan Devi Das who was the keeper of Royal seal, brother of Diwan Bhawani Das.

In order to assist Bhawani Das in his work of department organization Maharaja Ranjit Singh invited Ganga Ram who was known as a man of ability and was recommended to the *Maharaja* by Bhai Lal Singh and Sardar Himmat Singh Jalwasia²¹². Ganga Ram accepted the offer and was accorded a cordial reception on his arrival at Lahore. Diwan Ganga Ram joined the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1813.²¹³ Ganga Ram and his father had held important posts in Delhi under the Mughal Emperor and after that they joined the service of Sindhias of Gawalior. He had great experience to his credit. Under Ranjit Singh he became the head of the military office and the keeper of the royal seal. He was made one of the principal pay-masters of the irregular troops. Diwan Ganga Ram simplified the system of keeping records. He organized the *Abkari* (excise) system. In 1815, Diwan Ganga Ram invited Dina Nath, his close relative, to Punjab and placed him in that office.²¹⁴

Dina Nath was an able, astute and cool headed person. He worked with intelligence and diligence at Lahore *Darbar*. Dina Nath, because of his intelligence and business like approach soon caught the attention of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He first attracted the attention of the *Maharaja*

211 G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab As A Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, Hoshiarpur, 1960, (IInd edition), p. 105.

212 Ganda Singh (ed), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume* , p. 104.

213 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* ,p. 78.

214 Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 80.

after the capture of Multan in 1818 when he made out the lists of those entitled to rewards with great rapidity and clearness and adjusted the accounts of the province of Multan, which the first *Nazim* Sukh Dyal had thrown into great confusion.²¹⁵

Dina Nath, by his ability and political acumen rose to the highest position of power and influence in the affairs of the State. He demonstrated energy and intelligence of an extraordinary kind, and in 1826, on the death of Diwan Ganga Ram, he succeeded him as the keeper of the Royal Seal and head of military accounts²¹⁶. In 1834 on the death of Diwan Bhawani Das, he was made the head of the Finance Department.²¹⁷ Thus, he became finance minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh towards the end of the *Maharaja's* reign and possessed great influence during the latter years of his life. Besides these Hindus, there were some other notable Hindus who helped Diwan Bhawani Das in the establishment of the Central Secretariat and worked under him as his subordinates.

Rattan Chand Darhiwala was appointed, in 1829, in the postal department on Rs. 200 a month, with certain assignments from the revenues of Peshwar and Hazara. He was a *Darbar Munshi* from 1831 to 1849.²¹⁸ Rattan Chand Duggal was, appointed incharge of the *Maharaja's* private seal and held the office for several years.

Lala Karam Chand was one of the important *Munshis* of Ranjit Singh.²¹⁹ His forefathers had held administrative positions at the Court of the Mughals. For sometime, he was placed as the head of the revenue

215 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p.137.

216 Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p.361

217 *Ibid.*, p.380; N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1933, p. 184; Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families Note in the Punjab*, Lahore, 1940, p. 23; Ganda Singh(ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, p. 105; Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Patiala, 1981, p. 107.

218 Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families Note in the Punjab*, p. 448.

219 Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1933, p. 286.

office and was responsible for maintaining the seal of the *Maharaja*. But when Diwan Bhawani Das arrived in Lahore, Karam Chand worked as his subordinate.²²⁰ For the greater part of his career he remained attached to the revenue department, in the details of which, he was an acknowledged expert.

Shankar Nath was appointed at Lahore *Darbar* in 1820 and was placed in Kanwar Kharak Singh's treasury office.²²¹ Afterwards he was transferred to the Central Record Office, in which he remained till the annexation of the Punjab.

Two other Hindus occupying important positions were Misr Rallia Ram and Misr Sahib Dyal. In 1812, the *Maharaja* appointed Misr Rallia Ram the chief of the department of customs. Sahib Dyal was son of Rallia Ram and he first entered the service of the Maharaja as *Munshi* in the customs under his father. In 1832 he was transferred to the office of the paymaster of the regular army. These people helped Diwan Bhawani Das to establish his Central Secretariat. Officers were appointed at various levels of administration according to their caliber. According to Shahamat Ali, Diwan Bhawani Das established twelve *Daftars* or offices where the civil and military business of the Government was carried out,²²² but he gives no further details. Diwan Bhawani Das first of all introduced five departments later on their number increased to twelve. Each of these *Daftars* was entrusted to the care of a responsible courtier who worked under the personal direction of the *Maharaja*.

220 Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families Note in the Punjab*, p. 286; G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab As A Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, p. 106. Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1964, p. 372.

221 Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, pp. 253-54.

222 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 9.

The earliest seal of Ranjit Singh bears the Sambat 1856 (1800 A.D.).²²³ This would show that Ranjit Singh used his seal for the first time after the occupation of Lahore, that is nine years after his succession to the leadership of the Sukharchakia confederacy, or four years after his personal assumption of power. In 1803 Diwan Devi Das was made incharge of the seal with the caption, "*Sabt sarista-i-hazur shud*" (the document has been sealed in the presence of the *Maharaja*).²²⁴ When the pay orders were submitted to the *Maharaja* for approval, they were thus sealed to denote that the orders had been correctly rendered in writing. Diwan Bhawani Das organized the State treasury quite methodically. He divided the financial transactions into the following *Daftars*:-

1. **Daftar-i-Abwab-ul-mal (Daftar-i-Maliyat) or Land Reveune**

Department : This department dealt with the accounts of the revenue receipts of the *Maharaja's* Kingdom. It was sub-divided into four sections.

- a) **Jama Kharch-i-Taaluqas or Pagnas**: This section maintained the accounts of the land revenue realized from the *Pagnas*.²²⁵
- b) **Jama Kharch-i-Sairat**: This branch dealt with the income from octroi charges, taxes from salt mines, etc.²²⁶

223 Ganda Singh(ed), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, p, 101; Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His times*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 178; Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 240.

224 Ganda Singh(ed), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, p, 101; It is therefore, abundantly clear that Diwan Devi Das must have been appointed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in or before 1803 and not towards the end of 1809 as state in Lepel Griffin's *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*. However, according to Diwan Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 40. Dewan Devi Das first came to the *Maharaja's* court in 1808. But we agree with Diwan Amarnath's view because he was contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

225 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Lahore, 1919, Vol. 1, p. 125.

226 Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, p. 178.

- c) **Wajuhat-i-Moqarari-o-Abkari:** This section kept the accounts of income from the profit of justice or court fees and charges corresponding to the stamp duties of modern times. The receipts under this head were collected in different ways. First of all, certain charges were levied for the redress of grievances by means of judicial decisions. Fines paid to atone for criminal acts provided another item which may be put under this head. Then there were the proceeds from various charges levied on petitions by the people addressed either to the Sikh ruler or to one of his ministers. Lastly, the payments made for the affixation of the Royal Seal, on all kinds of private contracts.

Abkari (excise) included all charges imposed on the sale of opium, bhang, spirits and intoxicating drugs.²²⁷ The income derived from this source was comparatively insignificant.

Chaukiyat (customs and Excise Duties): Duties were levied on all articles irrespective of their origin or destination. Uniform rates of duties were fixed on all articles without making distinction between articles of luxury and necessity.²²⁸ It is said that Ranjit Singh's taxation embraced, "everything, every locality, every thorough fare, every town and village, every article wherever sold, imported or exported domestic or foreign."²²⁹ Even the agriculture produce on which land tax had been paid did not escape duty. While passing from one side of the country to another the produce would pay these charges as many times as it met a customs line, so that before reaching its destination its original price got sometimes doubled or multiplied manifold. The charges were generally accepted in cash. There was no tax on salt. Salt mines were leased to

227 Karam Singh Historian (ed.), *Bahumulle Ithasik Laikh*, p. 127.

228 Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, p. 206.

229 Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1905, p. 145.

merchants. However, the customs were neither oppressive nor unjustified because if it had been so, thus writes N.K. Sinha, the merchants could have changed their routes and conveyed "their goods though the territory of a less exacting chief."²³⁰ According to Steinbach, yet the duties, though levied at every ten or twelve miles, are light. To save themselves the trouble of constantly recurring payments, the merchants generally contract for the conveyance of their goods a carvon from one point of the country to another. This party who takes charges of the goods, paying all duties in the States through which they pass, should any chief, however, impose a vexatious tax, the conductor of the carvon has the option of changing the route, and conveying the goods through the territory of one who has the power to protect and the inclination to encourage the transit of traffic through his dominions.²³¹

d) **Nazarana (tributes and presents):** This section dealt with income from presents. *Nazarana* was also a tribute paid to the ruler on different occasions and under various circumstances by the subject of the State especially by prominent vassals and dignitaries.²³² Sometimes it was in the form of a fixed annual charge from a subordinate chieftain. Sometimes it was the Prince paying to conqueror for the retention of a piece of territory by a defeated Prince. *Nazar* was paid to the *Maharaja* by ordinary officials of his Government also. This *nazars* could be put into two categories one, the fixed amount that was paid by the subordinate chiefs as those of Kulu, Mandi, Suket and Bilaspur and the second comprised

230 N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 145.

231 Lieut. Col. Steinbach, *The Punjab; Being A Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, Patiala, 1883, (reprint), p. 52.

232 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, Lahore, 1885, 1889 (Eng. Trans.), V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1974, pp. 213-14.

offerings and sarwarnas²³³ at court. *Nazrana* was given in the form of cash, horses, *shawls* and swords. The *Maharaja* received 80,000 rupees from the Sultan of Bahawalpur and the same price and some horses from Multan *Vakil*.²³⁴ After sometime Ranjit Singh received 25,000 rupees and 16 canons from Jahadad Khan as *nazarana*.²³⁵ During the same year Damodar, the Kabul *Vakil* presented *nazarna* of 50,000 rupees and some horses.²³⁶

Zabti (escheats and forfeitures) was also a source of considerable income to the Sikh ruler, who often punished his delinquent officials with fines or forfeitures of property or both. Besides, in several cases, he withdrew grants of land from the descendants of his deceased Sardars. These were sometimes retained by the State while sometimes they were re-granted to others in lieu of cash payments.

2. **Daftar Awab-ul-Tahweel or Income and Expenditure**

Department: This *Daftar* was concerned with the records of accounts of income and expenditure sent by officials.²³⁷ Ranjit Singh set up treasuries in all *Pargnas* with the requisite staff. The payment of the salaries of the *Pargna* officials was made from the local treasury. Other requirements in respect of money were also met out of the *Pargna* treasury. These local treasuries were placed in the charge of officers called *tahweeldars*.²³⁸ The *tahweeldars* were cashiers with whom the Government money was deposited or through whom it was expended. At first this department under

233 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, pp. 214, 358.

234 Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. III, pp. 210-11.

235 *Ibid.*

236 Karam Singh Historian (ed.), *Bahumulle Ithasik Laikh*, p. 128.

237 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. I, p. 125; Karam Singh Historian (ed.), *Bahumulle Itihasik Laikh*, p. 130.

238 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. I, p. 125 and Vol. II, Lahore, 1927, p. 3.

tahweeldars dealt with accounts of a varied nature, including incomes derived from different sources and expenses incurred in numerous ways.²³⁹ This comprised the accounts of multifarious natures such as the accounts of the central treasury, of the paymasters, of the army, of purchases, of buildings, of cloth merchants and of jewelers etc.²⁴⁰ But when separate offices to record income and expenditure of different branches of the administration were set up, the work of this office became more limited. The accounts of the expenses incurred in the local manufacturing of guns, rifles, gunpower and shells were also kept in the offices of the *tahweeldars*.

3. Daftar-i-Taujihat or Royal Household Department: The third department was in charge of the accounts of the Royal household. It was divided into two sub-divisions of the imperial household expenditure or *Daftar-i-Akhrajat* and the pay department *Daftar-i-Mawajib*.

a) Daftar-i-Akhrajat: This *Daftar* dealt with expenditure. It comprised the expenses incurred under the following heads.

1. *Inam* (rewards, gifts)
2. *Ibitia* (purchases)
3. *Istabal* (stable)
4. *Istimal* (goods or material used or consumed in manufacture of things)
5. *Tamir* (buildings)
6. *Tahaif* (presents)
7. *Khillat* (robes of honour)
8. *Khurish fil* (feed of elephants)
9. *Dharamarth* (charity)

239 Ganda Singh(ed), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, p. 114.

240 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, p. 3.

10. *Ziyafat* (entertainment)
11. *Mukula Saggam* (feed of hounds)
12. *Tama Sher* (feed of lions)
13. *Jagirat* (grants of land)
14. *Langar Khas* (royal kitchen)
15. *Musaidat* (advances of money)
16. *Kiraya* (fare of hired camel and carts)
17. *Madid Kharch* (aids and advances etc.)²⁴¹

b) Daftar-i-Mawajib or Pay Office: This *Daftar* was a pay office. This office maintained the accounts of pay and other emoluments in the various Government departments, such as the army, the civil staff, the clerical establishment and the menials. In order to cope with the swelling work and expansion of the civil and military organizations, this department was divided into several sub-heads such as (a) *mawajib fauj sowari* (Irregular Cavalry); (b) *mawajib piyada mutayyana qilajat* (infantry garrisoning forts); (c) *mawajib sair Jamaat* (miscellaneous companies and guards quartered at Government buildings, ferries, etc.); (d) *mawajibamla* (establishment).²⁴²

4. **Daftar-i-Roznamacha or Audit and Accounts Department:** The fourth *Daftar* came into existence in 1816.²⁴³ This office was set up to register account of daily expenditure and income through the treasurer in relation to miscellaneous items under various heads. The items entered in the *Roznamacha* were later posted under their appropriate heads. This *Daftar* was headed by Abdul Karim.²⁴⁴

5. **Daftar or Sarishta-i-Hazur:** It may be called imperial or *Maharaja's* own department. It was created in 1803. It attended to the *Maharaja's*

241 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, p. 4.

242 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. I, p. 126.

243 Ganda Singh (ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, p. 111.

244 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

correspondence with heads of other States and foreign high dignitaries. This office kept the *Maharaja's* privy and personal seal to be affixed on important documents. The same seal was to be put on all orders verbally given by the *Maharaja*. Without this seal no order was executed. The *Diwan's* office charged a certain sum for putting this seal on every paper. The keeper of the seal paid a fixed amount into the imperial treasury annually. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Devi Das, who was incharge of finance and the farmer of privy seal was never a defaulter in the payments of revenue and regularly paid the money to the banker.²⁴⁵

6. **Daftar-i-Toshakhana or the Ragalia and Treasury:** *Toshakhana* is literally a store room, a wardrobe or a chamber where rare and valuable articles were kept. *Toshakhana* was divided into two parts : *Toshakhana Khas* and *Toshakhana Behla*.²⁴⁶ *Toshakhana-i-Khas* was established in 1818.²⁴⁷ The head of the *Toshakhana Khas* was called *Toshakhania*. Misr Beli Ram was incharge of *Toshakhana Khas* during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.²⁴⁸ His Uncle Basti Ram had been the treasurer of Maha Singh,²⁴⁹ the father of Ranjit Singh and continued to hold major appointments under Maharaja Ranjit Singh for about twenty years. On his death in 1816-17. Beli Ram who had already served *Toshakhana* establishment for about seven years as the first assistant, was made to succeed his uncle.²⁵⁰ The office of the custodian of the *toshakhana* like that of the *Deohriwala* or Chamberlain was one of great importance on the

245 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Lahore, 1961 (Punjabi Trans.), pp. 93-94.

246 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records* Vol. II, p.304.

247 Ganda Singh (ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, p.106.

248 *Ibid*; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, pp. 267, 290.

249 Carmichael Symth, *A History of The Reigning Family of Lahore*, Calcutta, 1847, p.152.

250 Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, pp. 93-94; Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, p. 304.

household establishment of the *Maharaja*.²⁵¹ Owing to his efficiency and intelligence and above all his fidelity to the interests of the State, the young Misr Beli Ram soon was held in high esteem by the *Maharaja* who appointed him as the Chief Manager and the Controller of the treasury.

Like other courtiers of the day, Misr Beli Ram also made full use of his influence and position in the *Darbar* to advance the interests of his family. He succeeded in securing high appointments for his brothers, Rup Lal, Megh Raj, Ram Kishan and Sukhraj. Rup Lal was the *Nazim* of the Jalandhar Doab, one of the richest provinces in the Khalsa dominion. Megh Raj was the custodian of the treasury at Gobindgarh (Amritsar)²⁵² and Ram Kishan was made Chamberlain to the *Maharaja* who always treated him with special kindness. Sukhraj, the youngest of the five brothers, joined the army. Thus the *Misr* family became a very powerful family at the court. During the *Wajarat* of Jawahar Singh in 1843-44, Misr Megh Raj succeeded his brother Beli Ram as the Chief *Toshakhania* and continued to serve, for sometime even under the British Government after the annexation of the Punjab.²⁵³

The other noteworthy family associated with the *Toshakhana* or treasures at the Sikh court was that of Misr Jassa Mal. He started service as a clerk in the treasury under Basti Ram²⁵⁴. After the death of Misr Basti Ram, Misr Beli Ram his nephew, who stood high in favour and confidence of Ranjit Singh was appointed chief *Toshakhania*. Misr Jassa Mal still only a petty writer or *Munshi* under Misr Beli Ram. Jassa Mal

251 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, p.304

252 Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families Note in the Punjab*, p. 362; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab (1839-1845)*, Hoshiarpur, 1969, p. 31.

253 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*. Vol. II, p. 305; Bhagat Singh, "Court and Courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, October 1980, Vol. XIV (II), p. 100.

254 Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, p.152.

was a good scribe and could write exceedingly well the landa characters in which the treasury accounts were kept.²⁵⁵ He remained, therefore, for the most part of his early days in service, on camp duty with the *Maharaja*. It was during these tours that Jassa Mal came into frequent notice of Minister Raja Dhian Singh who subsequently became the patron of the family. Raja Dhian Singh, who was on bad terms with Misr Beli Ram, persuaded Ranjit Singh to appoint Jassa Mal, whom he presented as a most upright man of great abilities, to the charge of all the money and valuables received from Kashmir, then newly conquered. Raja Dhian Singh obtained for Jassa Mal the independent charge of the *Behla Toshakhana* when this service treasury was created in 1817-1818 as a separate treasury.²⁵⁶ Jassa Mal was soon able to secure lucrative appointments for his two elder sons Amir Chand and Bhagwan Singh in the Revenue Department and the third Lal Singh was taken as his personal assistant on the *Toshakhana* establishment. In 1834-35, after the death of Jassa Mal, the post of the chief treasurer in the *Behla Toshakhana* was conferred upon his youngest son Lal Singh, who subsequently became a very important person in the State.

Misr Beli Ram had in his careful custody *Khillats*, ornaments, gold, silver, pearls, diamonds and other rare articles. The important State papers, such as treaties and documents concerning the foreign relations of the Lahore Government were also consigned to the custody of the *Toshakhana*. The smaller *Toshakhana* contained things of common use which the *Maharaja* generally gave away to the visitors. It was a small service treasury for cash and such other things as were in daily requisition. The activities of this service treasury were growing every day

255 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, p. 306; Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, p.152.

256 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol-II, p. 306.

as there was going on, at the court, a very frequent exchange of presents and ceremonies and visits between his Government and the representatives of the neighbouring rulers such as the British, the King of Kabul and the Amirs of Sindh.²⁵⁷

The *Toshakhana* department maintained separate accounts of the *Zar-i-naqd* or cash received in the treasury and the *Zar-i-jins* or the goods and precious metals kept in its custody from time to time.²⁵⁸ The goods included gold, silver, utensils of precious stones and the *pashmina* and exotic goods of Kashmir. This department also looked after the repair of the old and manufacture of the new articles of the above description and for that purpose it had, on its permanent establishment, a number of goldsmiths, engravers, and other skilled artisans.²⁵⁹ The fort of Gobindgarh in Amristar was the principal repository of the valuable property of the State.²⁶⁰ In this fort were deposited the articles of the *Toshakhana* or the royal wardrobe. Most of the *Toshakhana* stocks were kept in the fort of Lahore and Sheikhpura.²⁶¹ *Toshakhana*s also contained rare and valuable articles won as trophies of war. The unique and priceless *Kohinoor* diamond was also preserved in the *Toshakhana* under the care of Misr Beli Ram.²⁶² *Toshakhana* was the central point of all monetary/fiscal transactions. Payments were made from here to the clerks, to needy persons to thousands of people who ministered to the varied wants of the *Maharaja's* house-hold, purveyors, artisans, horse dealers and others. The *Toshakhana* papers contained several inventories

257 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol-II, p. 304.

258 *Ibid*; Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, p. 180.

259 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*. Vol-II, pp. 306-07.

260 *Ibid.*, p. 308.

261 *Ibid*.

262 Maharaja Ranjit Singh when at his death bed was persuaded by the *Brahmins* to make a gift of the *Kohinoor* diamond to the *Hindu* temple of Jagan Nath. Beli Ram refused to make over the diamond on the ground that it being not in a fit state of mind could not make the quest. Lieut Colonel Steinbach, *The Punjab; Being A Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, p. 13; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, Part-V, (Eng. Trans.) V.S. Suri, 1974, p. 694.

of confiscated property. The papers of the *Behla Toshakhana* are almost intact for the periods from 1816-35 and again from 1841-46.²⁶³ These comprise massive reams. The papers relating to *Toshakhana Khas* comprises only one bundle and this too is, unfortunately, neither complete nor very intelligible. There were three keys to the treasury. One key was with Misr Beli Ram, second with Fakir Nur-ud-Din incharge of the fort and third with Sardar Hukam Singh *Thanedar* of Lahore. The three keys applied together could open the gate of the treasury. Misr Basti Ram and Misr Beli Ram and then Misr Megh Raj had been looking after the *Toshakhana* very efficiently.

There were a number of other *Daftars* such as:

1. **Naqal Daftar or the Copying Office:** This copying office would naturally be established in conjunction with the office for the original work. This *Daftar* may be understood to date back to the same year as the establishment of the *Sarishta-i-Hazur*, i.e., 1803.²⁶⁴ The *Maharaja's* orders finally approved by him or judgments in judicial cases were sent to this office.²⁶⁵ To say nothing of the State, ordinary private even officers necessarily had *Naqal* sections attached to them from the very start.
2. **Daftar-i-Daroga or Octroi and Excise Department:** The Daroga was the head of the Octroi and Excise Department. The seal of this *Daftar* bears inscription "Ram Dayal" and is affixed under the caption *Sabt Daftar-i- Darogha*.
3. **Daftar-i- Moharyani or Royal Seals and Commission Department:** This *Daftar* came in 1834 with the seal "*Akal Sahai Mohar Daftar-i-Mubarik 1897*" under the caption "*Mohar-in-Mutabiq-*

263 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol-II,p.307.

264 Ganda Singh (ed.). *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, p. 112.

265 Hari Ram Gupta, *A History of The Sikhs* Vol-V, p. 331.

i-Amar-i-Ala Shud" or "*Sabt Srishta-i-Moharyani*".²⁶⁶ This *Daftar* was supposed to affix the seal of the *Maharaja* and charge commissions for such affixation from the payee-the commission to be deducted from the amount ordered to be paid from *Toshakhana*.

4. Daftar-i-Shahzada or Prince Department: Prince department seems, from the seals of this department on the *parwans*, to have originated in 1821 with the seal "*Sabt Sarishta-i-Shahzada 1878*".²⁶⁷ This *Daftar* was created to keep accounts of the income and expenditure of the assignments and *jagirs* of the royal princes.

5. Daftar-i-Khas or Daftar-i-Mulla or Special Royal Department: This *Daftar* was headed by Diwan Singh, was instituted in Sambat 1822 with the seal "*Sat Gur Sahai Khurm Rai*" with the Caption "*Mandraj Daftar a Mulla Shud*".²⁶⁸ This supreme department was created to supervise the overall functioning of the financial administration. This *Daftar-i-Khas* was established in 1823 with either of the two seals "*Akal Sahai Daftar-i-Khas 1880*" and "*Akal Sahai Diwan Singh*" under the Caption '*Tahrir Yaft*'.²⁶⁹

These *Daftars* seem to have passed through several changes, relating to the details of organization in subsequent years. With the passage of time some of these *Daftars* were abolished and a few amalgamated with others.

Hari Ram Gupta mentions some more *Daftars*²⁷⁰ which were the following:

1. The office of the Wazir or Prime Minister: Dhian Singh was *Wazir* or Prime Minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was

266 Ganda Singh (ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume* , p. 112.

267 *Ibid.*

268 *Ibid.*, p. 110

269 *Ibid.*

270 Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, pp. 331-332.

Maharaja's chief adviser in all matters. All important papers, documents, petitions and representations were first scrutinized by him and he jotted down his opinion. Then they were placed before the *Maharaja* for final orders. The *Maharaja's* orders were executed by him. The *Maharaja* issued orders in many cases without consulting the Prime Minister.

2. **Darogha-i-Deorhi Mulla or Lord Chamberlain:** This office was of great importance as nobody could see the *Maharaja* except through him. The first person to hold this office was Khushal Singh and after him Dhian Singh.
3. **Dabir-ul-Mamlikat or Foreign Office:** Faqir Aziz-ud-Din headed this department. It dealt with foreign relations with Afghanistan, Cis-Satlej States whose representatives live at Lahore, East India Company, Nepal and Sind. Fakir Aziz-ud-Din prepared the drafts which were modified according to the instructions of the *Maharaja*.
4. **Auditor General of Accounts:** Diwan Ganga Ram and Diwan Dina Nath held this office.
5. **Religious Endowments:** Bhais Gobind Ram, Ram Singh and Gurmukh Singh were incharge of this office.

The office functioning proceeded in the following way. When the *Maharaja* passed a pay order- he always did so orally and in Punjabi - it was written down in Persian by a *Munshi*, if one was present. When there was no *Munshi* in attendance, one or the other of the ministers or officers present transferred the order to writing and communicated it to a *Munshi*, who put it in proper form, in Persian, affixing his department's seal to it. The order was presented to the *Maharaja* for approval. Illiterate as he was, he had acquired a good knowledge of Persian and was able to understand the gist of his oral order; he suggested amendments or asked

for a revised draft to be submitted. After an order was approved two seals were put on it- one had the inscription, "*Akal Sahai Ranjit Singh*", in Gurmukhi and the other the inscription, "*Mulahiza Shud*" in Persian.²⁷¹ After being thus sealed, the order went round the various offices concerned. It was first sent to the *Sarishta-i-Hazur*, where it was recorded and stamped with a seal having the caption, "*Az Qarar-i-Hukm-i-Ashraf*" and the inscription, "*Sabt-i-Sarishta-i-Hazur shud*".²⁷² Then it was sent on to the *Daftar* of Devi Das, where it was noted and stamped. It was then sent to *Daftar* of Bhawani Das, where it was taken note of and stamped further. Then it went to the General Secretariat which was organized in 1811 and reorganized in 1820 where it was submitted to a further process of recording and stamping after which it was forwarded to the *Naqal Daftar* (the copying office). Here it was copied word for word. It was then transmitted to the *Daftar* of Ganga Sahai for information and record.

A regular circumlocution office existed in Ranjit Singh's time. Not even a pie could be paid out of the State treasury except through a regular channel. It is worthy of note that the *Maharaja* evolved a more or less meticulous and regular system which he consistently followed. The evolution and stabilization of the various *Daftars* of the finance department gave it control of almost all financial transactions. All pay orders or *parwanas* of payment passed through the relevant *Daftar* whose seal had to be affixed; a copy was kept in the *Naqal Daftar*. As time went on, one or the other of the various *Daftars* dropped out of the chain of financial administration. Towards the end of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign there is to be found just one seal, namely either that of

271 Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, p.108; Ganda Singh(ed), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, p. 108.

272 *Ibid*; p. 109.

'Kirpa Ram Sambat 1864' (1807 A.D.) or of 'Har Sukh Rai' the keeper of the *Maharaja's* private signet.²⁷³

As regards the total number of offices in the Secretariat diverse opinions have been mentioned. According to Shahmat Ali²⁷⁴ there were twelve *Daftars* towards the end of Ranjit Singh's reign, where the civil and military business of the Government arranged. G.L. Chopra in *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume* ²⁷⁵ has listed as many as fifteen finance offices only. Sita Ram Kohli²⁷⁶ mentions only five major *Daftars* which, however, are concerned only with finance. But there were many more offices and the number may quite well amount to twelve. Fauja Singh²⁷⁷ gives a list of twelve offices and Hari Ram Gupta²⁷⁸ mentions fourteen *Daftar* which were dealing with finance.

As the administrative problems of Central Government increased, men of talent and ability drifted to the court of Lahore. Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Devi Das. Misr Basti Ram, Kirpa Ram Chopra, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Rattan Chand Darhiwala, Rattan Chand Duggal, Misr Beli Ram, Shankar Das, Lala Karam Chand, Misr Rallia Ram, Misr Sahib Dayal were men who were employed by the *Maharaja* as it suited him best in secretarial capacity or as army commanders. Some of them rose to such eminence, that the *Daftars* under their charge were known by their names and seal of office such as *Daftar-i-Devi Das*, *Sarishta-i-Bhawani Das*, *Daftar-i Ganga Ram*, *Daftar-i-Shahzada*.²⁷⁹ All these persons enjoyed the great confidence of the *Maharaja* and shaped the financial and revenue policy of the administration. Every head of the

273 Ganda Singh(ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume* p. 111; Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, p. 109.

274 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 15.

275 Ganda Singh (ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume* , pp. 101-107.

276 Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. I, p. 125.

277 Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society under Ranjit Singh*, p. 401, Appendix – A.

278 Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, pp. 329-332.

279 Ganda Singh (ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, pp. 99-111.

department took orders from the *Maharaja* directly not through the Prime Minister. Maharaja Ranjit Singh supervised personally the working of all the *Daftars*, discussed with the officials in charge of them the minutest details and determined ultimate settlement. Lastly, for the establishment of the *Daftars*, the whole credit goes to Diwan Bhawani Das. No doubt, other Courtiers and Officials role was not of less significance. On the whole the balance of the Secretariat was heavily tilted in favour of one community i.e. *Hindu*.

CHAPTER-III

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATORS

The chapter aims to deal with the system of financial administration in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's tenure as the king of Punjab is remarkable, among other things for instituting a well define and meticulous system of financial administration which included both revenue collection and State expenditure. The policies of financial administration form at the centre level were systematically implemented according to the peculiar economic conditions of various territories. However, the success of these financial administrative policies was largely owing to the Hindu financial administrators who were very wisely choosen by the *Maharaja* to implement them. These Hindus had great eligibility for their jobs as they were well versed and familiar with financial management because of their experience in the Mughal Courts and other institutions. Thus the chapter focus on both the policies of revenue collection and expenditure and their systematic and efficient implementation by several important Hindu financial administrators.

The financial system prevailing in the Punjab during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign was very simple. There were no elaborate budget estimates prepared in advance by his Government. Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself, as we know, was the centre of whole governmental system and was assisted by a Chief Minister, few Ministers and a number of *Diwans*, *Thoshakhania*s and *Munshis* who administered different departments of the State. The departments like Revenue and Central Secretariat were given by the *Maharaja* to those astute Hindus, whose family members had in the past occupied ministerial posts in the Muslim

Court of Delhi and under the Kabul Government also. The finances of the Sikh Kingdom were regulated on the principle of keeping the expenditure within the limits of revenue. If the revenue of the Kingdom declined owing to some unexpected circumstances, the expenses of the State were also curtailed proportionately. There was no practice of meeting deficit by means of loans. As earlier stated in chapter II, the accounts of his revenue receipts and the expenditure were at first maintained by Rama Nand Sahu, a banker of Amritsar²⁸⁰ who held the Octroi of Amritsar and farmed the salt mines of Pind Dadan Khan. He acted as head cashier while Basti Ram was responsible for day to day expenditure and local Income at Lahore. Later on Rama Nand's *Thoshakhana* was called *Thoshakhana Khas* and the Lahore treasury as *Thoshakhana Behla*.

In 1805, Holker advised the *Maharaja* to constitute a regular treasury. The constitution of the Finance Department and the introduction of the system of maintaining official records goes to the credit of Diwan Bhawani Das.²⁸¹ As has already been stated the *Maharaja* appointed him to the position of *Bakshi* and also *Wazir-i-Mal*. Diwan Bhawani Das established a regular treasury and organized different departments to deal with various items of income and expenditure. At that time the total Income of Lahore *Darbar* was approximately 30 lakhs of rupees. Diwan Bhawani Das divided the financial transactions into *Daftars* like *Abwab-ul-Mal*, *Abwab-ul-tahwil*, *Taujihat*, *Roznamacha* etc. ²⁸²

As the Government of the *Sikhs* was simple at that time, the system introduced by Diwan Bhawani Das seems to have been quite elaborate.

²⁸⁰ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, New Delhi, 1991, p. 356.

²⁸¹ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, Patiala, 2003 (reprint), p. 311.

²⁸² For more details about *Daftars* see chapter-II.

Diwan Bhawani Das set up separate treasuries at important district headquarters such as Lahore, Amritsar, Jalandhar and Gujrat. These treasuries were required to maintain a regular account of all incomes and expenditures. Maharaja Ranjit Singh deserves the credit that belong to a reformer even at the time when he was not secure in his position in 1809 and the monarchy was being consolidated and strengthened by this most powerful Sikh Sardars. After the absence of a regular governance in the province for several years, the *Maharaja* re-established a departmental organization.

Ganesh Das Wadehra gives the names of a number of Hindu officials who worked under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the finance department. These were: Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Devi Das, Nanak Chand Chopra, Diwan Sawan Mal, Lala Karam Chand, Sohini, Shankar Das Duggal, Kirpa Ram Chopra, Hans Raj Qannugo, Maghar Mal Saini, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Lala Bhagat Ram, Amrik Rai.²⁸³ He also gives the names of *Munshis* i.e. Lala Ram Dayal Khawatia, Shiv Dayal (Moharwala), Rattan Chand Darhiwala, Rattan Chand Duggal, Sharda Ram, Sarab Dayal Laharia, Kahan Chand (Letter writer), Ram Chand Rabti, and treasurers were Misr Beli Ram, Misr Jassa Mal and Misr Ram Kishan while Misr Rallia Ram was head of customs.²⁸⁴

The revenue records of the Khalsa *Darbar* were written in Persian language. In the system of Persian accounts, the accounts are denoted by certain signs called *raqums*. In these *raqums* the highest figure is shown at the top, the next lower figure represents the smaller amount and so on.²⁸⁵ In 1815, the old division of major and minor heads of accounts was discontinued. The Exchequer Department was reorganized.

²⁸³ Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char bagh-i-Punjab*, MS 1855, Punjab State Archives, Patiala (Punjabi Trans.), Jeet Singh Seetal, p. 14.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, Lahore, 1927, p. 9.

The income accruing from sources other than land was consolidated under one general head of *sairat* and its sub-divisions of customs, excise and tributes. All of them constituted a sub-department of the Exchequer. This general reorganization of the departments added a new series of papers to the annual official records. The *awarcha* papers pertained to the debit and credit accounts whether receipts or expenditure. This was replaced by the simple word '*Jama Kharch*'. These *awarcha* papers were, strictly speaking, a sort of ledger for each head and sub-head of accounts in which were posted the items credited to that head from time to time. This was done to check the *Jama Kharch* accounts of various departments of the Government. This new system was introduced in 1815, when Ganga Ram was employed in the Finance Department of the Lahore *Darbar*.²⁸⁶ He had great experience to his credit and hence he was responsible for these improvements. He became the head of the military office and keeper of the royal seal. Diwan Ganga Ram simplified the system of keeping records. After his death the charge of the royal seal was entrusted to Diwan Dina Nath who later become head of the civil and finance offices, following the death of Diwan Bhawani Das.

The heads of Departments sent their official papers to the office of the *Diwan* for scrutiny. His office was a record office where these papers were stored in a proper place. The accounts submitted by the heads of Departments were scrutinized there and in certain cases, an abstract of them was retained for reference. According to Sita Ram Kohli the papers²⁸⁷ that were sent to the *Diwan's* office from the several departments were those relating to:-

1. *Taalukat*- collection of land revenue from districts.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁸⁷ These papers were relating to 12 *Daftars* and other sub offices. Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, pp. 7-8.

2. *Sairat*- collection of revenue from customs.
3. *Wajuhat*- collection of revenue from excise, etc.
4. *Nazrana*- collection of the fixed annual tributes, fines and presents.
5. *Tahwildars*- Government funds and other State transactions.
6. *Ibtiya*- Purchases of things for general use.
7. *Kiraya*- Fare of conveyances hired for Government business.
8. *Zakhirajat*- Transactions regarding the purchase and consumption of military stores.
9. *Ratib*-Purchase and consumption of fodder, etc. for Government stables.
10. *Mawajib*- Payment of salaries made to various branches of the army and civil establishments or *amla*.
11. *Madid Kharch*- Payment of political pensions and the ladies apartments.
12. *Siah rojnameha*- Details of payments made from the treasury as well as the cheques or cash orders on the district treasuries or on *tahwildars* etc.
13. *Awarcha*- The *awarcha* papers of certain heads of expenditure whose *Jama Kharch* account is not found among papers in the above list. It may be that these heads were grouped in one department and the office incharge was responsible directly to the *Maharaja*. These were the following:-
 1. *Inam* (rewards)
 2. *Tahaif* (presents)
 3. *Khilat* (robe of honour)
 4. *Dharmarth* (charity)
 5. *Itayat* (gifts)
 6. *Muqarrariyat* (fixed annuities)

7. *Sarf-i-hazur* (*Maharaja's* personal expenditure)
8. *Ziyafat* (entertainment)
9. *Rukhastana* (some cash given at the time of departure)
10. *Jagirat* (grant of land, etc.)
11. *Musaidat* (advances of money)
12. *Iwaz musaidat* (recovery of advances).

The important Hindu finance Ministers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were Diwan Bhawani Das and after his death Diwan Dina Nath. They were holding the charge of all the departments of income and expenditure. The papers pertaining to all transactions and payments in all departments of the state were inspected on monthly basis by him.²⁸⁸ It is almost evident that under the *Maharaja*, the functions and duties of the officials were not clearly defined and the powers and influence of an officer depended on his personal ability, tact and judgement. In the *Darbar* of Ranjit Singh which was composed mostly of the representatives of military class, Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Ganga Ram and Diwan Dina Nath who were known to be learned, were in great favour of the sovereign. Everyday in the afternoon, the *Diwan* read out the reports of the department to the *Maharaja* and obtained orders from him. These orders were usually written on the margin and conveyed to the concerned officers. No order of the Government about appointments and grants usually bore the seal of the *Diwan*. As the custodian of all the official records, the *Diwan* controlled the whole of the administrative machinery. Due to this position and intimate knowledge of the financial matters, Diwan Dina Nath remained indispensable to the early British administrators also for some time after the annexation of the Punjab in 1849.

²⁸⁸ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 312.

Every item of receipt or expenditure was recorded in the *Roznamcha* immediately after its receipt, sanction or actual payment. The writer of the *Roznamcha* (*Roznamacha navis*) sent his reports daily to the office of the *Diwan*.²⁸⁹ There the items were arranged and posted in the proper place in the *awarcha* or ledger. There was *awarcha* of each head and sub-heads of accounts. The *awarcha* of the receipts and expenditure were drawn in the name of the officer who was responsible for them. On the other hand, in the case of expenditure incurred on account of *inam*, *ziyافت* etc. the *awarchas* were prepared according to the heads of accounts.²⁹⁰ This system made easy the task of auditing and checking the statement of accounts presented by an officer. The *minifarda* portion of the statement could be compared with the *awarcha* in the office of the *Diwan* where the items were credited to his name. It was the main concern of the Government to ensure the accuracy of the amount credited to a peculiar officer or head of accounts. On the other hand, the office incharge was equally interested in the disposal of that amount in a satisfactory manner. It goes to the credit of Maharaja Ranjit Singh that he was the first Sikh ruler to organize the Finance Department. As merit was always the criterion for appointment on high posts of eminence, the appointments of experienced Finance Minister was an important political decision.

After 1834, when there was a considerable increase in the military budget, the ineffective nature of the *Kankut* system became apparent to Ranjit Singh. He started encouraging the practice of farming out revenues of large areas particularly of irrigable lands to the highest bidder for a period extending from three to six years. Under this system the cultivator or a big *Zamindar* or a big State official entered into a

²⁸⁹ Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol II, p. 10.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

contract with the State agreeing to pay the amount stated in the contract deed. The contractor was called *Ijaradar*. Such contracts eliminated the farmer or the middle man and the cultivators in the village land were allowed the full advantage of reaping the fruit of their labour. With the object of getting a sure and fixed estimate of the annual income the *Maharaja* promoted the practice of farming out the large area of lands and even districts to contractors or *Ijaradars* who agreed to make the payment of the State share regularly. Notably, according to James Douie, "the revenue system of Ranjit Singh was an organized system of pillage, for the country was farmed to contractors who were bound to pay a certain sum into the State treasury, and were permitted to collect as much more as possible for themselves."²⁹¹

The Sikh *Ijaradar* was no mere contractor. The amount of *Ijara* was generally close to the revenue due to the Government, the margin enabling the *Ijaradar* to meet the expense of collection and to save something as a profit. For example, the whole province of Kashmir was given in *Ijara* to its *Nazim* Diwan Chunni Lal for an amount of twenty seven lakh and fifty thousand rupees in 1824²⁹² and to Diwan Kirpa Ram for an amount of rupees twenty six lakh in 1826.²⁹³ Similarly, Shujabad in *Suba* of Multan was given to Diwan Sawan Mal and as after two years the revenues of this *Ilaga* increased by fifty percent and the *Maharaja* gave him Multan also in *Ijara*.²⁹⁴ Besides the *Nazim Ijaradars*, an important *Kardar*, *Ijaradars* was Misr Rup Lal who was given the *Ijara* of Jalandhar Doab.²⁹⁵ In 1817, Jhang was given to Sukh Dayal for an

²⁹¹ James Douie, *Punjab Settlement Mannual*, New Delhi, 1899, p. 19.

²⁹² Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, (Punjabi trans.) by Janak Singh, (ed.) by Kirpal Singh Patiala, 1983, p. 163; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 360.

²⁹³ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 176.

²⁹⁴ Munshi Hukam Chand, *Tarikh-i-Multan*, Lahore, 1884. p. 47, cited in Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 181.

²⁹⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, Lahore, 1885, 1899, (English Trans). V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1974, p.161.

amount to Rs. 4,00,000 and again in 1820 for Rs. 4,10,000.²⁹⁶ Similarly, in 1832 this *Ilaka* was given to Diwan Sawal Mal for an amount to Rs. 4,35,000.²⁹⁷ Diwan Devi Das, had taken the country of the Ramgarhias on a contract for Rs. 4 lakhs.²⁹⁸ The great seal (Muhar-i-Kalan) of the *Maharaja* remained in *Ijara* for a long time with Lala Devi Das for Rs. 1,80,000 till 1818 when it was given to Lala Devi Sahai for Rs. 2,25,000.²⁹⁹ On some occasions some competent high officials of the central offices of the State or some favourite or experienced chiefs like Diwan Bhawani Das would also be commissioned for the purpose. For example for the year 1817-18 Jammu was farmed out to Diwan Bhawani Das for one lakh of rupees.³⁰⁰ However in a given area, *Ijara* could alternate with direct collection. The proportion of revenue collected through *Ijara* appears to have been considerable.

The *Ijardari* system under the Sikhs was not confined to lands alone. Even *sairat* or taxes other than the land revenue were given in *Ijara* to important and responsible officials or citizens of the State. For example, Lala Sukh Dyal got the *Ijara* of the *sairat* for 13 lakh rupees³⁰¹ and similarly, the *sairat* of Kashmir were given in *Ijara* in 1822.³⁰² Generally the amount of the *Ijara* was close to the amount of revenue due to the Government. The *Ijaradar* was left with a small margin to meet the expenses incurred in connection with the collection and to get his share of profit. The *mushakhasa* or the assessed amount was generally

²⁹⁶ E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab 1874-1880*, Lahore, 1882, p. 39; *District Gazetteer of Jhang*, 1883-84, p. 36. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, Lahore, 1961 (Punjabi Trans.) p. 516; According to Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 341; Sukhdyal was got the *Ijara* of Jhang in Rs. 1,60,000.

²⁹⁷ E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab 1874-1880*, p. 39; *District Gazetteer of Jhang*, 1883-84, p. 36.

²⁹⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, (English Trans.) V.S. Suri, Amritsar, 2002, p. 228.

²⁹⁹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 264.

³⁰⁰ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, p. 350.

³⁰¹ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 80.

³⁰² Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 308.

based on records of collections made in the past. If the revenue of a particular area increased, the amount of *Ijara* was also raised. Before giving an area in *Ijara* to a person the *Maharaja* obtained the correct information regarding the income from the revenue of that area. Diwan Sawan Mal and General Ventura were commanded by the *Maharaja* to prepare correct estimates of revenue accruing from Dera Ghazi Khan and Jhang before these areas were given in *Ijara*³⁰³. The *Ijaradars* were required to submit a detailed statement of the produce of land under them and the amount collected. Before getting the charge of an *Ijaradari* he was bound to give a deed of acceptance to the Government. The net amount of *Ijara* was given in the deed along with the crop from which the contract took effect. The *Ijaradar* gave an undertaking to report correctly about the amount collected from the peasants and also promised to keep the people content and the area under cultivation.³⁰⁴ Each *Ijara* grant was made in writing and invariably contained a reference to the urgency of always keeping in mind the welfare of the cultivators and prosperity of the *Ilaka*.

The majority of the *Ijaradars* were connected with Government and administration in one way or another. Diwan Devi Das, Bhai Ram Singh, Fakir Nuruddin, Prince Naunihal Singh, Raja Bhupinder Pal of Basoli, Raja Dhian Singh, Raja Fazl Dad Khan, Diwan Sawan Mal, Sham Singh Peshawaria, Sardar Desa Singh Majithia, Sardar Jawand Singh Maukal were all connected with the Government and had been big *Ijaradars*. The *Zamindars* could lodge complaints against the *Ijaradars* before the *Maharaja* and also the *Ijaradars* could complain against the high

³⁰³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, Part -I, p. 23, Part-II, p. 233, Diary of L. Browning, Punjab Government Records (1847-1849) Vol-IV, Allahabad, 1911, pp.406, 408-409; Diary of A. Cocks, Punjab Government Records (1847-1849) Vol-IV, Allahabad, 1911, p. 44.

³⁰⁴ Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh", p. 82.

handedness of the high-ups of the Government against them and their cultivators.³⁰⁵

Diwan Sawan Mal, *Nazim* of Multan introduced many innovative methods to increase the finance of the Lahore *Darbar*. He organised a fresh revenue system and fixed the taxes on the land actually under cultivation according to the nature of crops grown.³⁰⁶ Four methods of collection of revenue were employed 1. *Jinsi or Batai*- The standard method of a share in the crop at a rate which varied according to the condition of the soil. It averaged between 1/4 to 1/3 of the gross produce. 2. *Naqdi- Jinsi* or cash kind assessment, by which the landlord purchased the Government share at a fixed rate. 3. *Zabti* or cash assessment per acre on certain crops 4. *Qorari* or cash lumpsum assessment, where the landholder had himself provided means of cultivation or wells without state help, a fixed assessment in money was appraised under a deed, which stipulated the Governmental share usually at 12 rupees per well.

In Multan, Diwan Sawan Mal imposed a cash deposit on certain crops the produce of which could not stand the delay of division or could not be appraised correctly. This cash assessment was known as *Zabti Zama* and such crops were called *Zabti* crops. This method of assessment was applied to the perishable crops as sugarcane, cotton, tobacco, pepper, indigo, oilseeds, pulses, vegetables and the spring fodder.³⁰⁷ In the part near Multan the revenue was usually taken in kind, because grain was required for the troops and the court. In the rest of the district the *mahsul* was returned to the cultivators, who were obliged to buy it from Government at a rate which was usually 25 percent above the

³⁰⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, Part-II, p. 138.

³⁰⁶ E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab*, 1874-1880, p. 113.

³⁰⁷ W.E. Purser, *Final Report of Revised Settlement of Jalndhar District*, Lahore, 1892, p. 151.

market price. The following crops paid the rates per *bigha* by this system.³⁰⁸

Kharif crops

Rawanh	Rs. 1.00 per <i>bigha</i>
Jawar grown for fodder	Rs. 1.00 per <i>bigha</i>
Chilies	Rs. 4.00 per <i>bigha</i>

Rabi crops

Methra	Rs. 10 to Rs. 12 per <i>bigha</i>
Peas	Rs. 1.00 per <i>bigha</i>
Green wheat used as fodder	Rs. 1.00 per <i>bigha</i>
Tobacco	Rs. 4.00 to Rs. 5.00 per <i>bigha</i>
Saffron	Rs. 4.00 per <i>bigha</i>

In the district of Jhang following are a few instances of the cash rates paid per *bigha*:³⁰⁹

Wheat	Rs. 1-12 to Rs. 2
Barley	Rs. 1 to Rs. 2
Tobacco	Rs.8
Cotton	Rs.1-12 to Rs. 2-12
Indian Corn	Rs. 1 to Rs. 2.
Jawar	Rs. 1 to Rs. 2
Sarshaf	Rs. 2 to Rs. 5.

The rates of land revenue under *Zabti* system varied for not only different crops but at different places also. They varied according the productivity of the soil, nature of crops, means of irrigation and other facilities. The most fertile and favourably situated lands with irrigational facilities were assessed as high as fifty percent of gross produce, while

³⁰⁸ Edward O' Brien, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab, 1873-80*, Lahore, 1882, p. 85; *District Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh*, 1883-84, p. 149.

³⁰⁹ E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab 1874-1880*, p. 114; *District Gazetteer of Jhang*, 1883-84, p. 141.

the State share on less fertile and unfavourably situated land varied from two-fifths to one-third.³¹⁰ On the other hand, land was assessed at a much lower rate. Fifty percent of the gross produce was rather uncommon and occasional in Multan, where the Government share varied mostly from 1/3 to 1/7 of the gross produce³¹¹ According to Sita Ram Kohli, "In this province, a peculiar sort of tenure known as the *Chakdari* tenure was prevailing at this time."³¹² It probably originated with the desire on the part of the ruling power to reclaim the waste land that was lying in abundance in the country. Where the owner did not cultivate the land Diwan Sawan Mal granted patents to individuals other than the owner to sink wells and earn the profit for themselves paying only a nominal rent to the proprietor through the State. The tenant or the occupant paid the revenue to the State which the latter divided with the proprietor in the ratio of 2 to 1. The cultivators were actually assessed according to their capacity to pay. As far as possible the State dealt directly with the cultivator and joint responsibility for payment of land revenue demand was not enforced.³¹³

The other method for the collection of revenue which was prevailing in Multan was *Chahat-i-Iqrari*, by which the cultivated lands were assessed at lump-sum was prevalent only in some very small parts of the Kingdom. Under this system wells were made the basis of assessment. A lump-sum was levied upon the land conveniently irrigated by one well. The land irrigated by an average well, constituted a unit for the purpose of revenue assessment.³¹⁴ Such wells were called *Chahat-i-Iqrari* or

³¹⁰ H.K. Trevaskis, *Land of Five Rivers*, London, 1928, p. 181.

³¹¹ *District Gazetteer of Multan*, 1883-84, pp. 123-24; Also see Charles A. Roe, *Report on the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of the Montgomery District of Multan of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1878, p. 47.

³¹² Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh", p. 446.

³¹³ James Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, p. 19.

³¹⁴ Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 194.

Qorari-i-Chahat.³¹⁵ The area irrigated by them was seldom given but undoubtedly the area attached to these wells was specified and the assessment was made with reference to the area attached to the well. A fixed cash assessment on wells was levied according to their quality and the circumstances of each locality. In some places the demand varied according to the number of oxen employed on the well. The usual rate was Rs. 10 to Rs. 12, but a good well would pay Rs. 20.³¹⁶ When the lessee cultivated more than the usual area attached to one well, the fixed sum was set aside and the whole of the crop was divided according to the *batai* system.³¹⁷ Diwan Sawan Mal encouraged the sinking and repair of wells by giving favourable leases. Generally Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 were charged from the owner of a well that irrigated thirty to fifty acres of land. Approximately the water works amounted to rupees two to three per acre. Diwan Sawan Mal, with a view to facilitating the pastoral tribes of the *bar* encouraged them to found villages and settle down permanently to agriculture, allowing them to hold land at very lenient assessment and ultimately fixed it at sixty two rupees per well.³¹⁸ He made a concession in favour of new wells and generally 1/2 to 1/4 of the demand was remitted over a period varying from ten to twenty years.³¹⁹ Thus we see that there was no uniform rate of assessment levied on the wells. The amount was to be paid in two installments of *Rabi* and *Kharif*. In Multan and Jhang divisions the Government sank wells at its own expense in order to reclaim the waste land and charged extra in addition

³¹⁵ Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", p. 444.

³¹⁶ Roe, C.A. Mesers, and W.E. Purser, *Report of the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of the Montgomery District of Multan*, p. 140; *District Gazetteer of Multan, 1898-99*, p. 193; *District Gazetteer of Montgomery 1883-84*, p. 154.

³¹⁷ Edward O' Brien, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab, 1873-80*, Lahore, 1882, p. 84.

³¹⁸ M.F. O' Dwyer, *Final Report on the Revision of the Settlement of Gujranwala District, 1889-1894*, Lahore, 1894, p. 11.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

to the revenue ordinarily leviable.³²⁰ It gave a good deal of encouragement to the spread of cultivation and also allowed the cultivators a reasonably good margin of profit. Wells so constructed by the Government were known as *Chahat Shahana* or royal wells. There was another class of wells in the same division known as *Chahat Istmarari* upon which an assessment of Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 was imposed in perpetuity.

Apart from land-revenue there were separate taxes on pasture lands and orchards. There were many date and other trees in Multan. If a person want a *tahli* tree, he was obliged to obtain a personal interview with Diwan Sawan Mal and make his request. If the tree and the price was paid before leave to cut the tree, was given. Leave could be obtained from the *Kardar* to cut *ber*, *Kikar* or *siris* trees on payment of from 8 annas to Rs.1.³²¹ The amount of revenue from date trees increased in Multan particularly under Diwan Sawan Mal.³²² Pasture lands were yet another source of revenue to the State as grazing tax was realized from the users of such land. It was Diwan Sawan Mal under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who developed *tirni* as an important source of income to the State. According to O' Brien, Diwan Sawan Mal collected *Tirni* tax by different methods. *Tirni dukan* was yearly fee of Rs. 1, paid by all artisans, not by shopkeepers, *Tirni Shutaran*, a poll-tax on camels. The rate varied from Rs.1 to Rs. 2 a year. *Tirni rasan* a poll-tax on female buffalos, sheep and goats.³²³ Diwan Sawan Mal first took one goat and one camel from every

³²⁰ General Report upon the Administration of Panjab Proper 1849-50 and 1850-51, pp. 130-40.

³²¹ Edward O' Brien, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab, 1873-80*, p. 88.

³²² Date Trees were a source of Income to the Government in other areas also. Of all the trees in Muzaffargarh, the largest revenue was derived from the date trees. Edward O' Brien, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab, 1873-80*, p. 88.

³²³ Edward O' Brien, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab, 1873-80*, p. 87.

herd but after the census of cattle fixed the following annual rates in cash.³²⁴

Camel (female)	Rs. 2.00
Camel (Male)	Rs. 1.00
Buffalo	Rs. 1.00
Cow	Paise. 0.60

The Government also claimed from 1/3 to 1/6 of all fishes caught in the river, lakes and ponds.³²⁵

Apart from the land revenue Diwan Sawan Mal charged a number of cesses.³²⁶ *Abwabs* were many small cesses collected along with the land revenue. However, there was a uniform percentage taken under this head. They were collected under various heads and described as *malba*, *maghala*, *shukrana*, *nazrana*, *chari*, *naaorchahi*, *dumbiri*, *nazrmuharir*, *paomani*, *kadamkash*, *bhara*, *muhassali*, *nazar mukaddami*, *igtala* or *wazn keshi*, *tapkhana*, *chilkana*, *jamabandi*, *khurak*, *khreach*, and *khira*. They varied from 5 percent to 10 percent of the revenue,³²⁷ and the rate of revenue ranged from 33 percent to 40 percent on the average. Even one-half share of the Government was equivalent to about 40 percent of the gross produce.³²⁸ Thus the cultivator normally parted with less than half of his produce. The incidence of *abwab* at places was inversely related to the rates of assessment; where the rate of the Government

³²⁴ Cf. G.W. Hamilton, *On the Tirnee Tax of Jhang*, Selection, PC PA, 1, No. 9, 103, cited in Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 106.

³²⁵ Edward O' Brien, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab, 1873-80*, p. 88.

³²⁶ *District Gazetteer of Multan (1883-84)* p. 294; *District Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh 1883-84*, pp.119-20; Edward O' Brien, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab, 1873-80*, p. 86; *District Gazetteer of Jhang 1883-84*, p. 141; *District Gazetteer of Montgomery 1898-99*, pp. 193-94; E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab 1874-1880*, Lahore, 1882, p. 114; Charles A. Roe, *Report on the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of the Montgomery District of Multan of the Punjab*, p. 37; P.J. Fagan, *District Gazeetter of Montgomery District 1898-99*, Lahore, 1900, pp. 193-94.

³²⁷ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh First Death Century Volume*, Patiala, 1970, p. 136; Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration under Maharaja Ranjit Singh", p. 84.

³²⁸ Henry Lawrence, *Adventures of An Officer in the Punjab*, Vol- I, Patiala, 1970, (reprint) p. 50.

share was high, cesses were few; where the rate was low, cesses were many. O' Brien makes this statement with particular reference to Diwan Sawan Mal's administration in Muzaffargarh³²⁹ but this was equally true of the other areas under the *Diwan*. All these methods of assessing land revenue were concurrently employed in one part of the Kingdom or another throughout the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Multan was studded with a system of old and new canals by Diwan Sawan Mal.³³⁰ Land taken by a canals passage/course were held to be the property of the persons through whose lands the canals passed. Diwan Sawan Mal was the first to interfere in this matter by prohibiting the cutting of Shisham trees on the canal banks without a licence.³³¹ The annual canal clearance was done by the whole body of canal irrigators. Diwan Sawan Mal introduced the *hasil cher* system under which the canal clearance was undertaken by Government in consideration of the payment of a certain rate.³³²

Among them *Nakdi Jinsi* or cash kind assessment indicated the first step towards a cash revenue and this form of assessment became more common under Diwan Sawan Mal. According to the standing orders of Diwan Sawan Mal, the *Kardar* was to send the schedule of rates (*nirkh-nama*) of all grains duly signed by the *panches* and the *zamindars* every season. These rates varied from locality to locality, but were generally slightly higher than those prevalent in the local market.³³³ Another special method of assessment sometimes employed for wells in the heart

³²⁹ Edward O' Brien, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab, 1873-80*, p.84.

³³⁰ For more details about Canals see Chapter V.

³³¹ A.H. Diack, *Final Report of the Revision of the Settlement of Dera Ghazi Khan District 1893-97*, Lahore, 1898, p. 56; F.W.R. Fryer, *Final Report of the First Regular Settlement of Dera Ghazi Khan in the Derajat Division, 1869-74*, Lahore, 1876, p. 56.

³³² F.W.R. Fryer, *Final Report of the First Regular Settlement of Dera Ghazi Khan in the Derajat Division, 1869-74*, p. 56.

³³³ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, p. 95.

of Rawa, more especially on the borders of the present Multan and Ladhra Tehsils, was to take a certain sum (generally Rs. 2 or Rs 3) per yoke cattle in use on the wells.³³⁴

The revenue was collected twice a year, a month or so after the reaping of the two harvests, called the *Rabi* (summer) and the *Kharif* (winter) respectively. The *Kharif* officer incharge of the collection in a *Talluqa* was the *Kardar* (collector) and he was assisted by subordinate officials like *Muqadams* (foreman), *Patwari* (revenue assessors) and *Qanungos* (hereditary registrars)³³⁵. The actual collection was made by *Muqadams* with the help of *Chaudharis*. They had the right to a commission on the revenue payable through them-the rate being generally five percent of the total collection. After defraying local expenses out of the revenue proceeds the balance was remitted to the *Khazana-i-Amra* (main treasury) at Lahore or else handed over to one of the Receivers-General of revenue. Remittances to Lahore were usually made by means of *hundis* drawn upon Amritsar bankers.³³⁶ The dates of the payment were, accordingly, so fixed that the cultivators could find time to sell his produce or could conveniently borrow from the village *sahukar* (banker) and were consequently in a position to pay his liabilities to the Government. The State share from the *rabi* crop was paid in *Jeth-Har* (May-June), that is about a month after the harvesting was over and that for *Kharif* was paid during *Katik-Maghar* (October-November)³³⁷.

The collection of revenue was made in both kind and cash. In Multan, collection for the same crop was made partly in cash and partly

³³⁴ P.J. Fagan, *Punjab District Gazetteer of Multan, 1923-24.*, p. 238.

³³⁵ For more details about *Kardar*, *Muqadam*, *Patwari* and *Qanungo* see Chapter V.

³³⁶ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 22.

³³⁷ Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, p. 199; Also see Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration under Maharaja Ranjit Singh", p.499.

in kind.³³⁸ In Multan a *Patta* was given for a well, fixing its assessment varying from Rs. 12 to Rs. 20 in accordance with the area and nature of the crop sown. It would be generally 25 *bighas* of wheat for the *rabi*, 5 *bighas* of cotton and 15 *bighas* of *Jawar* for the *Kharif*. All extra cultivation was charged according to a certain rate per *bigha*.³³⁹ Revenue in cash was collected in installments.³⁴⁰

The revenue system of Sawan Mal was essentially fluctuating. Whether the harvest was good or bad enough was left over to the cultivator to live upon.³⁴¹ At the time of famine or scarcity in produce due to some natural calamity the *Maharaja* was always sympathetic towards the cultivators. Diwan Sawan Mal's assessments were adjusted on a very perfect knowledge. He began low and gradually raised the assessment as circumstances justified it. Under Diwan Sawan Mal there was a great deal of personal interaction with the cultivators and it was part of the administration to ensure that the rights of all persons attached to the land were secured.

Further, in the province of Multan, where the country was little better than a desert and the cultivator more or less depended upon artificial irrigation, the State undertook the task of sinking wells, and Diwan Sawan Mal started other irrigation works by way of repairing the old canals and digging of several new ones.³⁴²

³³⁸ *District Gazeeter of Multan, 1883-84*, p. 124.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ According to the Instructions issued to the *Kardars* of Multan by Diwan Sawan Mal. They were expected to send the revenues punctually in six installments, three each for *Kharif* and *rabi*:

<i>Kharif</i>	First Installment	:	15 <i>Magh</i>
	Second Installment	:	15 <i>Poh</i>
	Third Installment	:	15 <i>Magh</i>
<i>Rabi</i>	First Installment	:	15 <i>Jeth</i>
	Second Installment	:	15 <i>Har</i>
	Third Installment	:	15 <i>Sawan</i>

³⁴¹ E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab 1874-1880*, p. 114.

³⁴² For more details see chapter V.

Misr Rup Lal was another Hindu appointed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh *Nazim* of Jalandhar Doab. About the revenue assessment in Jalandhar, it is asserted that "Miser Rup Lal's demand seems to have been usually moderate and equal to have included all legitimate extra dues and that his rates were such that holders to his leases seldom hesitated at a later period to produce them before the British settlement officers-a sure sign that they would not object to pay his assessment"³⁴³. On 31 December 1832, Misr Rup Lal was appointed to collect Rs. 5,22, 000 from the *Kardars* and *Jagirdars* of *Doaba* but he was enjoined to make the collection keeping in view the prevailing conditions of the country.³⁴⁴ He was more successful than his predecessors in introducing cash payments of revenue. Misr Rup Lal compounded in one sum the revenue and all extra dues and cesses leviable by the state; and his rates were such that holders of his leases, seldom hesitated, at a later period, to produce them before the British settlement officers -a sure sign that they would not object to pay his assessments. Even in the famine year of 1833 there were very few unpaid balances.³⁴⁵ Misr Rup Lal was a popular and concientious administrator and did not approve oppression of any kind. His revenue measures have been unanimously described as efficient and progressive.³⁴⁶ The amount of the revenue collected by him from *Doab* of Jalandhar was about rupees 18, 72, 902³⁴⁷.

The Sikh rulers were anxious to increase cultivated area by bringing more and more waste pasture lands under cultivation. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in fact, made all possible efforts to protect cultivators from official oppression and the raids of the marauding tribes living on the borders of his Kingdom. Strict instructions were given to the army not to

³⁴³ Punjab District Gazetteers, Vol-XIV A, *Jalandhar District and Kapurthala State*, 1904, p. 251.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Part -II, p. 161.

³⁴⁵ Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 362.

³⁴⁶ G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, Hoshiarpur, 1960, p. 109.

³⁴⁷ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 12.

destroy crop and oppress the peasants.³⁴⁸ According to Sohan Lal Suri, the *Maharaja* issued an *Ishtiharnama* (proclamation) to most of his provincial *Nazims* and *Jagirdars*, namely Raja Gulab Singh, Suchet Singh, Misr Beli Ram, Misr Rup Lal and Ram Kishan, Lehna Singh Majithia, Colonel Mihaan Singh, Bhais Mohan Singh, Dal Singh, Surjan Singh and Diwan Sawan Mal asking them to keep in view the solicitude and prosperity of the subjects in all administrative matters, especially in collection of revenue and to avoid every kind of oppression of the cultivators.³⁴⁹ In the same manner under Ranjit Singh's special direction, the Governor of Kashmir, Kirpa Ram gave to the people there least cause of complaint.³⁵⁰ Diwan Kirpa Ram introduced the system of farming out to the highest bidder the revenue of various *Pargnas* or districts. The collection for the same crop was made partly in cash and partly in kind.³⁵¹ Forty lakhs was the sum paid annually in the treasury of Ranjit Singh by Diwan Kirpa Ram. The *shawl* trade was in flourishing condition. The tax on *shawls* brought about 12 lakhs of the whole revenue³⁵². The rest was obtained from taxes on produce and a number of direct and indirect impositions.

The total amount of land revenue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Kingdom is estimated at Rs. 1, 24, 03, 900 by Murray³⁵³. The amount given by Murray includes income realized from tributes. Shahamat Ali estimated the total revenues from land at Rs.1,96,57, 172.³⁵⁴ The figures

³⁴⁸ H.L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra, (eds.) *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh 1810-17*, Monograph No. 17, Patiala, 1970, pp.7, 120, 184-85, 191; J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (Tr. & ed.), *Civil and Military Affairs of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Amritsar, 1987, Documents 46, 125, 228, 237.

³⁴⁹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, Part -IV, p. 516.

³⁵⁰ H.L.O. Garrett, (ed.), *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, Monograph No. 18, Punjab Government Records Office, Patiala, 1997 (reprint), p. 81.

³⁵¹ Ganeshi Lal, *Siyahat-i-Kashmir, (Journey to Kashmir)*, MS M/480 Punjab State Archives, Patiala, (Eng.Trans), V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1976, p. 40.

³⁵² H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, p. 122.

³⁵³ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, Patiala, 1989, (IInd edition), p. 151.

³⁵⁴ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 19.

given by Cunningham are only about 5 lakhs less, amounting to Rs. 2, 79,00,000.³⁵⁵ According to these figures, the total annual revenues from land in the dominions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh ranged between 2 and 3 crores of rupees and on the average, they were more than two and half crores of rupees.

In Kashmir, the average of these figures comes to over 34 lakhs of rupees a year. Shahamat Ali gives 36, 75, 000 rupees as land revenue in 1838.³⁵⁶ Cunningham writing in 1844, gives 30, 00, 000 rupees for Kashmir.³⁵⁷ The average for Multan works out to about 41 lakhs of rupees a year. According to Shahamat Ali, the land revenue of Multan was 38, 98, 550 in 1838.³⁵⁸ For 1844 Cunningham gives 45,000,000 rupees for Multan.³⁵⁹ The average for those parts of the five *Doabs* which were covered by the former Mughal province of Lahore comes to over 95 lakhs of rupees a year. Shahamat Ali's estimate is however Rs. 18,72, 902³⁶⁰ and according to Cunningham it was Rs. 22,00,000.³⁶¹ The average for the three provinces of Kashmir, Multan and Lahore adds up to 1 crore and 60 lakhs of rupees a year.

Misr Rallia Ram was the head of the customs department³⁶² with his son, Misr Sahib Dayal who latter succeeded him. Besides land tax, there were some other, though less important sources of revenue to the State exchequer including customs and excise duties. Customs duties were levied on every article even on fuel wood and vegetables. No

³⁵⁵ Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Satluj*, New Delhi, 1977, p. 387, Appendix XXXVIII.

³⁵⁶ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 22.

³⁵⁷ Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Satluj*, p. 384, Appendix XXXVIII.

³⁵⁸ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 21.

³⁵⁹ Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Satluj*, p. 384, Appendix XXXVIII.

³⁶⁰ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 21.

³⁶¹ Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Satluj*, p. 384, Appendix XXXVIII.

³⁶² Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 2002 (reprint), p. 130.

distinction was made between rich and poor. Griffin mentions that duties were charged on 48 articles.³⁶³ As regards salt tax Wade told the *Maharaja* on 25 February, 1832, that in British territory it was customary to take salt from the trader at one place. Afterwards he could go anywhere in his country and nobody could interfere with him. He suggested that the same practice should be adopted in the Sikh Kingdom. On 16 May 1839, the *Maharaja* approved the following scale of customs duties on export and imports.³⁶⁴

Shawls	Per maund	Rs.10.00
Opium	"	Rs.7.50
Indigo	"	Rs.2.50
Cloth of all sorts	"	Rs.0.25
Sugar, Molasses, Oil,	"	Rs.1.00
Ghee, etc.		
Drugs, Fruits, metals, dyes	"	Rs.0.25
Grain of all sorts	"	Rs.0.12

Duties were levied on all articles irrespective of their place of origin or destination. Uniform rates of duties were fixed on all articles without making distinction between articles of luxury and necessity.³⁶⁵ It is said that Ranjit Singh's taxation embraced everything and every locality.³⁶⁶ Even the agricultural produce on which land tax had been paid did not escape duty. While passing from one side of the country to another it would pay these charges as many times as it met a customs line, so that before reaching its destination its original price got sometimes doubled and even more. However, The customs were not oppressive and objectionable. As earlier stated in Chapter II, because had

³⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 145.

³⁶⁴ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, p. 505.

³⁶⁵ Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, p. 206.

³⁶⁶ For more details see Chapter II.

they been so, thus writes N.K. Sinha, the merchants could have changed their routes and conveyed "their goods through the territory of a less exacting chief."³⁶⁷ Commerce was in a flourishing condition. The total amount of income realized from customs is estimated by N.K. Sinha at Rs. 16,36,114,³⁶⁸ while Lepel Griffin estimates it at Rs. 16,37,000³⁶⁹ and Murray brings this figure to Rs. 19,00, 600.³⁷⁰

Before the appointment of Diwan Bhawani Das no tax submitted to Lahore *Darbar* was received from salt mines. It was Diwan Bhawani Das who first organised the tax from salt mines systematically.³⁷¹ According to N.K. Sinha, the tax from salt monopoly amounted to Rs. 8,00,000 approximately³⁷² and according to Sita Ram Kohli the sale of salt brought Income of Rs. 4,63,675.³⁷³

Maharaja Ranjit Singh offered the office of *Mir Munshi* to Diwan Devi Das for one lakh of rupees. Royal seals were affixed on all kinds of contract and this also seems to have brought in a good income, as sometimes they were farmed out to responsible officials for fixed money payments. All these sources of income, judicial as well as Royal seals, were known as *wajuh-at-i-Moqarari*. Diwan Devi Das requested the *Maharaja* to grant him some concession in the fixed amount. The *Maharaja* said that as more places had come into his possession and he should willingly agree to it. Devi Das, thus, accepted and promised to abide by all the orders of the *Maharaja*.³⁷⁴ On 15 November, 1814 at Amritsar, Maharaja Ranjit Singh told Diwan Devi Das that he could get

³⁶⁷ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1933, p. 144.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

³⁶⁹ Lepel. Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 145.

³⁷⁰ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 151.

³⁷¹ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 312.

³⁷² N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 145.

³⁷³ Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Delhi, 1953, p. 217.

³⁷⁴ G.L. Chopra and H.L.O. Garrett (eds.), *Events at the Court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, p. 42.

contract of the *Maharaja's* seal for Rs. 1,75,000. He agreed to it.³⁷⁵ On 5, February, 1816, Hakim Rahulla Khan accused Diwan Devi Das of taking bribes from everybody. Diwan Devi Das who was present replied that he had acquired everything through the blessing and glory of his master and repudiated the accusation. At this the *Maharaja* smiled.³⁷⁶ Murray estimated the annual income from the *Moharana* at Rs. 5,77,000.³⁷⁷

One of the most important cesses of the Sikh times was *Nazr* or *Nazrana* for the *Kardars*, the *daftaris* and the like. The rate of the *Nazrana* for the *Kardars* in Chhachh was four rupees, and for other *mutasaddis*, two rupees³⁷⁸. Some of the other cesses were *Jama bandi*, for the preparation of the rent roll; *Nazar-i-muharrir*, to start weighing; *muhasili*, for the field watchman; *bhara*, for carriage hire; *Khurak*, towards feeding the measures; *Chilkana*, to make up the difference between the standard and other rupees; *Sarrafi*, for testing the money paid as revenue; *Nazr-i-muqaddami*, for good harvests; *Shukrana*, for rise in prices after commutation; Compensation, for *bhusa* not taken in kind; a fixed amount per plough for not sowing *Zabti* crops, money commutation for fodder, *Begar*, and for a skin, a blanket and a pair of shoes; and *Nazr-i-Kanjan*, a cess on each *Kamil* well of eight yokes. All these cesses were not levied at a single place. Where the produce from land was actually bataied, the equivalent of extra cesses were taken out

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

³⁷⁷ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 151.

³⁷⁸ *Foreign Department: Secret Consultation*, 28 April 1848, No. 66, NAI.

before the produce was divided between the cultivator and the Government.³⁷⁹

Besides the Governors, there were other officers and *Kardars*, such as the sons and nephews of the *Faqir* and the *Misir*, who governed the small districts. These officers sent the amount by means of the *Hundis* at Amritsar. Amarnath states that in 1815, Diwan Moti Ram along with Fakir Aziz-ud-Din realized Rs. 6,000 from Patta town.³⁸⁰ In 1838, the *Maharaja* demanded from Diwan Dina Nath an account of the *Nazrana* and *Mushaksha* payments due from the Rajas of Suket and Mandi.³⁸¹

During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's period no regular budget was prepared. The money received from different sources was earmarked for specific purposes and the Government roughly knew the expected income and expenditure. The main heads of the expenditure were the royal household, the administration, the army, the pious and charitable organizations, works for the improvement of agriculture, public works and rewards, gifts and presents bestowed by the *Maharaja*. The expenses of administration comprised salaries of the public servants including the Ministers, Governors and other officers and the personnel of the Government.

³⁷⁹ For more details see *District Gazetteer of Multan, 1883-84*, pp. 124-25; *District Gazetteer of Gujranwala, 1883-84*, p. 71.

³⁸⁰ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.77.

³⁸¹ Similarly, in June 1832, the total assessment with Ram Chand *Kardar* of Amritsar was Rs. 1,01,000 of this Rs. 86,000 had been realized. The remainder of Rs. 15,000 was to be paid by him. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, (Part-II), p. 146; During the same year in December the region of Gujrat, Mirpur, Chamak and Kurianwala was granted to Shiv Dayal son of Diwan Moti Ram for Rs. 2,10,000, while Rs. 21,000 were granted to him in lieu of salary. The *Maharaja* ordered that he should engage himself in making collections from his country keeping in view the prosperity of the region and the satisfaction of the *Zamindars*. On 13 June, 1832, *Misir* Amir Chand, nephew of Jassa *Misir* and Ram Dayal Peshauria were ordered to collect large sums of money from Jalandhar, Rahon and other places keeping in view the prosperity and pleasure of the *Zamindars*. Rs. 700 were given to Amir Chand. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, (Part-II), pp. 159,142.

Despite various changes, financial administration remained in an unsatisfactory condition till the last years of Ranjit Singh's reign. He was personally responsible to a large extent for this State of affairs. He trusted his memory for remembering complicated accounts of his expenditure and for many years periodically allowed the rough memoranda of those who were responsible to him to be destroyed. In the absence of records embezzlement became quite easy. Not to speak of lower-grade officials, men at the top took advantage of the situation. Diwan Sawan Mal surpassed everyone in trade or in any speculation in which rapid fortune could be made.³⁸²

From the provinces of Lahore, Multan and Kashmir during the Mughal period the total revenues had amounted to 3¹/₂ crores of rupees. In the reign of Ranjit Singh the land revenue from these provinces came to only about 2¹/₂ crores. This was not due to low production. The difference in the total revenue was due largely to the lower rates of assessments. On the whole despite its flaws it was simple, just and intelligible to the common people.

It becomes clear from the above facts that the Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh had highly developed and efficient system of financial administration. Although land revenue was the major source of revenue collection, other taxes, like customs, cases, from an important part of the system of someone. Similarly the State expenditure was also accounted for under several well defined heads. As has been observed several Hindu financial administration like Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Dina Nath, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Devi Das, Diwan Sawan Mal, Misr Rup Lal, Diwan Kirpa Ram etc. were instrumental in making Ranjit Singh's financial administration successful. Interestingly many inovative and

³⁸² A.C. Banerjee, *The Khalsa Raj*, New Delhi, 1985, p. 136.

modern schemes like, *Ijaradari*, *Zabti* system, *Chahat-i-Qarari*, struck a balance between the interests of the rulers and the rule.

CHAPTER-IV

MILITARY COMMANDANTS

In this chapter attempt has been made to trace out the ranks and positions assigned to Hindu Courtiers and Officials at the Lahore *Darbar*. Their military abilities, services, their participation in various campaigns and contribution in the battle fields have been discussed and examined critically. The *Maharaja* exhibited keen interest in appointing the *Hindus* as military commandants because of their bravery, courage and leadership qualities. Doubtlessly, most of the conquests in Ranjit Singh's early career, when he was trying to establish and consolidate the kingdom, were fought and commanded by Hindu Commanders and Generals.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was helped in his territorial expansion by a number of brilliant military commanders like, who were Hindus, Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Ram Dayal and Diwan Bhawani Das. They play a significant role: the firm establishment of the Sikh empire.

The most distinguished general with the help of whose skill and courage Ranjit Singh rose from chief-ship to the Emperor of the Punjab, was Diwan Mohkam Chand.³⁸³ From 1806 to 1814 he remained associated with almost all the military campaigns of the *Maharaja* as the chief military adviser and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. During the period of consolidation of power by Ranjit Singh and until his death Diwan Mohkam Chand was a constant companion of the Lahore Monarch. The *Maharaja* expressed his appreciation of military ingenuity

³⁸³ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, Lahore, 1865, p. 551.

by conferring upon him the titles of *Diwan* and *Fateh Nasib* in 1812.³⁸⁴ He joined the expeditions of the *Maharaja* to the Cis-Satluj territory in 1806 and 1807, Kangra in 1809, Jalandhar in 1811, against Kashmir in 1812 in conjunction with Fateh Khan, against Fateh Khan in 1813, where he defeated the Afghan *Wazir* in the battle of Haidaru.

The first task assigned to Mohkam Chand was to capture the fort of Pathankot³⁸⁵ known to be one of the strongest forts in Punjab those days. The task was accomplished soon and received forty thousand from Jaimal Singh. Then the General proceeded to subdue the hilly territories of Jasrota, Chamba and Basoli and imposed considerable tributes. Rupees 8,000 yearly was fixed on the *Rajas* of Basoli and Chamba each.³⁸⁶ He crossed the Satluj and snatched Zira from the widow of Sardar Mohar Singh Nishanwalia. Being aided by Sodhi Jawahar Singh, he occupied Mukatsar and Kotkpura, the possessions of Jagat Singh Buria. He also realized tribute from the ruler of Faridkot. Later, he seized village Mari from Hari Singh and Arbel Singh, the brothers-in-law of Tara Singh Ghaiba.³⁸⁷

In October 1806 Ranjit Singh found conditions conducive to establish his authority in the Malwa region. The occasion was the dispute between the chiefs of Patiala and Nabha over the village of Doladhi. Raja Bhag Singh of Jind was an ally of the *Raja* of Nabha and so were the Ladwa and Kaithal Chiefs. They were aware that they could not contend with the forces of the Raja of Patiala. Raja Bhag Singh who was the maternal uncle of Maharaja Ranjit Singh sought assistance from

³⁸⁴ G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, Hoshiarpur, 1960, p.104; Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Patiala 2001, p. 96.

³⁸⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, Lahore, 1885, 1889, Trans by V.S. Suri, Amritsar, 2002, p.58; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, Lahore, 1928,(Punjabi translation) Janak Singh, (ed.) by Kirpal Singh, Patiala, 1983, p. 36.

³⁸⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 58.

³⁸⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 552.

him. Mohkam Chand, with a force about 20,000 strong accompanied the *Maharaja*. In the situation that developed Patiala was constrained to submit very soon and the *Raja* of Nabha and Jind paid their *Nazrana*. The *Maharaja* crossed the river at Ludhiana and occupied it and handed it over to Raja Bhag Singh³⁸⁸. He deprived Rani Lachmi widow of Sudha Singh of her territory. During this expedition, the *Maharaja* seized Ludhiana, Jandiala, Baddowal, Jagraon, Kot, Talwandi and Saniwal. He distributed the territory among the rulers of Jind and Nabha, Gurdit Singh, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Diwan Mohkam Chand.³⁸⁹

The second opportunity was provided to Ranjit Singh by the dissensions between the Raja of Patiala and his wife, Rani Aas Kaur. She invited him to espouse her cause, promising a famous brass gun, *Jamjama*, belonging to the family and a precious diamond necklace as the price of his assistance. The Sikh ruler crossed Satluj at Hari-ke-Pattan in September 1807. On his way to Patiala, he seized all the remaining possessions of the deceased *Rao Ilias* and distributed them among his own dependents and allies. However, before he reached Patiala, the Raja and the Rani had reconciled through the mediation of the Jind and Thanesar Chiefs. Nevertheless Ranjit Singh exacted his prize. Diwan Mohkam Chand besieged the fort of Nariangarh from Kanwar Kishan Singh of Nahan.³⁹⁰ Naraingarh was given to Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. During the return journey, Mohkam Chand captured a number of small principalities such as Wadni, Zira, Morinda etc. The *Maharaja* gave the district of Zira to Mohkam Chand and Wadni to his mother-in-law Sada Kaur.

³⁸⁸ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881 (Punjabi Translation) Jeet Singh Seetal, Patiala, 1968, p. 163.

³⁸⁹ Lepal Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 552.

³⁹⁰ Bhagat Singh, *A History of Sikh Misals*, Patiala, 1993, p. 76.

In 1807, Diwan Mohkam Chand remained employed in reaching settlement with the dependents of the deceased Tara Singh Ghaiba head of the Dallewalia *Misal*.³⁹¹ The estates, which were worth over seven lakhs a year in revenue, extending over the town of Rahon, Nakodar and Naushera, were merged with the Lahore *Darbar*. Ranjit Singh gave a *Jagir* of a few villages to his widow.³⁹² In June 1807, Ranjit Singh sent a force under Mohkam Chand to seize Dinanagar and a few other places belonging to Sada Kaur. The *Diwan* captured the places and acquired 9 guns, 7 elephants, 50 horses and about two lakhs of rupees in cash.³⁹³ After this Diwan Mohkam Chand along with Fakir Aziz-ud-Din was sent to settle the areas beyond Satlej. They received the *Nazrana* of Rs. 2500 from Dhunna Singh Hijria, military incharge of Ferozpur.³⁹⁴ In 1808 Mohkam Chand occupied Sialkot from Sahib Singh Bhangi.³⁹⁵ Sahib Singh Bhangi was arrested, brought to Lahore and produced before Ranjit Singh. Although Sahib Singh was released, all his lands and properties were confiscated.³⁹⁶ Subsequently, in July 1808, Diwan Mohkam Chand seized the territories on both sides of the Satlej from Anandpur (Makhowal) downwards which once belonged to Tara Singh or to Baghel Singh.³⁹⁷ The *Maharaja* was well pleased with the *Diwan's* distinguished services. In the course of three years from 1806 to 1808 Diwan Mohkam Chand received many *ilaqas* in *Jagirs* including portions

³⁹¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Lahore, 1961, (Punjabi Translation), p. 472.

³⁹² Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, MS, 1848, Punjabi Translation, p. 45.

³⁹³ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, New Delhi, 1999, p. 50.

³⁹⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 60; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 48.

³⁹⁵ Gulcharan Singh, "Diwan Mohkam Chand", *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta, September 1970, Vol. XVIII, p. 32.

³⁹⁶ H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p. 51. Prinsep says Diwan Mohkam Chand captured Sheikhpura in 1808. But he was at this time engaged in reducing the Anandpur Makhowal Valley and had nothing to do with the Sheikhpura expedition, which was under the charge of Kanwar Kharak Singh, Compare with Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 61; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh -i-Punjab*, p. 48; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 184; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, Patiala, 2003 (reprint), p. 310.

³⁹⁷ Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, MS 1855, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Punjabi Trans by Jeet Singh Seetal, p. 591.

of Gill, Kot, Jagraon, Talwandi, Dharamkot, Kotkapura, Zira, Faridkot, Saniwal, Jandbar, Bharampur, Dhari and Chandpur comprising 268 villages and yielded revenue worth Rs. 154, 255 a year.³⁹⁸ The area of Rahon and Nakodar worth Rs. 6,42,611 was also to him as *Jagir*.³⁹⁹ The *Maharaja* from time to time, besides titles, bestowed upon him an elephant, valuable horses, a precious Kalamdan, a Kirpan and Kalgi.⁴⁰⁰

Raja Sansar Chand sought assistance against Gurkhas from Ranjit Singh who was engaged in negotiations with Metcalfe. The *Maharaja* sent Diwan Mohkam Chand to Kangra to help Sansar Chand with caveat of handing over the fort of Kangra as the price of his assistance.⁴⁰¹ The *Raja* agreed to cede the fort after the expulsion of the Gurkhas and offered his eldest son as a hostage, but Mokham Chand and his master did not agree. At this time, the negotiations with Metcalfe were at a critical stage, the *Diwan* with his army was summoned. After the conclusion of the treaty of Amritsar the *Maharaja* again sent his troops towards Kangra. According to Cunningham." "The stronghold was offered to the Sikh ruler as the price of his assistance but Sansar Chand hoped, in the meantime, to gain admittance himself, by showing to the Gurkhas the futility of resisting Ranjit Singh, and by promising to surrender the fort to the Nepal Commander, if allowed to withdraw his family."⁴⁰² Maharaja Ranjit Singh saw through the duplicity of Raja Sansar Chand who by this stratagem wanted to retain the fort for himself. The *Maharaja* arrested Anrudh Chand son of Sansar Chand and cajoled Amar Singh Thapa whom he promised a joint expedition against the Rajput hill chiefs and

³⁹⁸ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p.552.

³⁹⁹ Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Kitab-i-Hind*, MS, 1291, Khalsa College, Amritsar, (Punjabi Trans.) Gurbakash Singh, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Patiala. p. 76; W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Allahabad, 1846, p. 159.

⁴⁰⁰ Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Delhi, 1953, pp. 93-94.

⁴⁰¹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 58; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 194.

⁴⁰² Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Satluj*, New Delhi, 1977 (reprint), p. 132.

also Kangra as part of the Gurkha share of the general spoil. The *Maharaja's* troops took possession of the fort of Kangra by deceptively demanding entrance as the expected relief. Sansar Chand was baffled by this counter strategy and the *Maharaja* took possession of the fort in 24 August, 1809. Amar Singh Thapa deemed it prudent to retreat across the Satluj. The Sikhs in alliance with the Hill Chiefs disrupted his communications. Diwan Mohkam Chand was appointed Governor with Desa Singh Majithia as his deputy. As the *Diwan* was required for other expeditions, the full charge of Kangra hills was entrusted to Desa Singh Majithia.

In 1810, Diwan Mokham Chand accompanied the *Maharaja* to Multan, but the attack on the place proved to be abortive and only Muzaffar Khan the Governor of Multan paid tribute. During 1810, Mohkam Chand, at the head of a 5,000 strong force was assigned the task of subjugating the chiefs of Bhimbur and Rajauri. When the Sikh force arrived at Bhimbur, its chief Sultan Muhammad Khan, shut himself in the fort.⁴⁰³ Although, he put up a strong resistance, the resistance did not last long and the fort was captured. The Sultan agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 40,000⁴⁰⁴ and was reinstated in the chieftainship. The Rajauri Chief also met a similar fate.

In 1810 Mohkam Chand subjugated the country held by Kahan Singh Nakkai.⁴⁰⁵ The territory under the Nakkais was situated between Multan and Kasur. It generated an annual income of nine lakh rupees. The territory included the towns of Chunia, Dipalpur, Sharkpur, Satgarha, Kot Kamalia and Goggera. Ranjit Singh was married to Datar

⁴⁰³ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 209.

⁴⁰⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 91; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Kitab-i-Hind.*, p.82; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 324; W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 167.

⁴⁰⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 96; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 88.

Kaur, the sister of Sardar Gian Singh, the chief of the Nakkai *Misal*. As referred to earlier Kharak Singh was born to Datar Kaur. Sardar Kahan Singh, son and successor of Gian Singh Nakkai, had gone to Multan to realize the tribute from Muzaffar Khan on behalf of the Lahore *Darbar*.⁴⁰⁶ Ranjit Singh sent Mohkam Chand and Prince Kharak Singh to the territory of the Nakkais to take charge of the same.⁴⁰⁷ The Nakkai administrator Diwan Hakam Rai immediately approached Ranjit Singh with the request that it was not appropriate for the Lahore forces to take military action against the *Misal*. In case the territory of the Nakkais was allowed to continue in the hands of Sardar Kahan Singh a big *Nazrana* would be given to the *Maharaja*.⁴⁰⁸ Maharaja Ranjit Singh told Hakam Rai, "I have nothing to do in the matter. Prince Kharak Singh is the maternal grandson of the Nakkais. Only he knows as to what is to be done."⁴⁰⁹ Mohkam Chand conquered the fortresses of Chunia, Dapalpur and Satgraha. Sardar Kahn Singh came back from Multan to find his *Misal* gone out of his hands. He was given a *Jagir* worth twenty thousand rupees annually.⁴¹⁰

Diwan Mohkam Chand moved to Phillaur and subjugated the Chief of Jalandhar. Budh Singh Faizalpuria, who had possessions on both sides of the Satluj, did not care for Ranjit Singh. For long, the *Maharaja* had wanted to subjugate him; his refusal to attend the court providing the excuse. On October 1811, Mohkam Chand with forces of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia entered the Jalandhar Doab to wrest the possessions of Faizalpuria Chief.⁴¹¹ Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, in the words of Lepel Griffin, "were to have

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 96,88.

⁴⁰⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 96; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 88; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 52.

⁴⁰⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 96; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 108.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 88.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 88-89.

⁴¹¹ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 325.

formed an alliance with Budh Singh Faizalpuria to resist Ranjit Singh should he attack either of them. But it was perhaps to postpone an attack on themselves, which they saw was imminent, that they joined the *Diwan* in his attack on Jalandhar."⁴¹² Budh Singh escaped to Ludhiana and sought protection of the British. The fort of Jalandhar and its surrounding areas were conquered by Diwan Mohkam Chand.⁴¹³ Budh Singh's possessions near Tarn-Taran were also captured by the *Maharaja's* artillery officer Ghaus Khan. Thus a territory bringing an annual income of three lakhs rupees fell in to the hands of the *Maharaja*. Ranjit Singh also got some cash and ammunition from the fortresses of the Faizalpuria. For these conspicuously important services rendered by Mohkam Chand, he was honoured with the title of *Diwan* and a rich *Khillat* was granted to him⁴¹⁴, together with a sword set in diamonds and an elephant with a golden *Howdah*.⁴¹⁵

In 1812, Diwan Mohkam Chand subjugated Kulu⁴¹⁶ and got the *Nazrana* of one lakh ninety thousand rupees from the ruler of Mandi and other hill territories.⁴¹⁷ The same year Ranjit Singh found reason to send a campaign under Diwan Mohkam Chand to Kashmir. The incentive was an offer of Fateh Khan, the minister of Shah Mahmud of Kabul to join forces with him to invade Kashmir. The beautiful valley of Kashmir, because of its physical loftiness has a dominating and strategically important position in Central Asia. From the perspective of defence of the Indian subcontinent it is of great importance since it occupies a place of great strategic value. It was more so in the case of the

⁴¹² Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p.553.

⁴¹³ Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Kitab-i-Hind*, p. 34; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 203; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 480-81.

⁴¹⁴ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 326.

⁴¹⁵ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1964, p. 390; G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, Ludhiana, 1973, p. 199.

⁴¹⁶ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 59.

⁴¹⁷ Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Kitab-i-Hind*, pp. 82-83; W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 168.

Punjab since after the decline of the Mughal rule in India the Kashmir Valley had been under the rule of the Afghans. During the reign of Zaman Shah, grandson of Abdali, Ata Muhammad was the Governor of Kashmir. During the struggle for the Kabul throne between Shah Shuja and Shah Mahmud, Ata Muhammad had helped the former. Shah Shuja had unfortunately lost the battle for accession. The Kabul *Wazir*, Fateh Khan, was thus not happy with Ata Muhammad. In 1812, the *Wazir* decided to punish the Governors of Attock and Kashmir who were both brothers. With this intention, the *Wazir* at the head of a huge force crossed the Indus towards the end of November. Fateh Khan was strongly opposed to Ranjit Singh but he had a realisation that he alone might not be able to conquer Kashmir.⁴¹⁸ There was also some apprehension in his mind of co-operation or alliance being forged between Ranjit Singh and Ata Muhammad. On his part the *Maharaja* did not consider himself strong enough to conquer Kashmir single handedly while being opposed by the Governor of Kashmir on the one hand and the Kabul *Wazir* on the other. When the *Maharaja* and Fateh Khan came to know of each other's designs, they both pretended to co-operate with each other in their common adventure and declared it as a common cause. Both needed each other's assistance. According to Payne, "Neither party desired to come to blows, and neither was inclined to advance into the hills with the possibility of having its retreat cut off by the other. There was but one alternative. The leaders met and agreed to finish the hunt together, and divide the spoil. On this understanding the parties advanced, each having made a mental reservation to outwit the others if the opportunity offered."⁴¹⁹ Each party wanted to use the other for its own benefit and a race for Kashmir between the two equally matched

⁴¹⁸ . Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 75.

⁴¹⁹ C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Patiala, 1970, (reprint) p.79.

adversaries started. According to N.K. Sinha, "Ranjit's chief motive in joining Fateh Khan was not so much the lure of a heavy money payment, nor the hope of getting Kashmir itself by some stratagem, as the desire to acquire local knowledge for future use. Another motive of Ranjit Singh in participating in this expedition was his eagerness to get the person of Shah Shuja, the ex-King, who was a closed prisoner of Ata Muhammad Khan of Kashmir."⁴²⁰ Wafa Begum, wife of Shah Shuja, had taken shelter in Lahore and had promised the *Maharaja* the world famous *Kohinoor* in exchange for the release of her husband.⁴²¹ As she was in distress for shortage of funds she was being granted Rs. 4,000 a month by the Lahore *Darbar*.⁴²² According to Sohan Lal Suri and Diwan Amar Nath, Goder Mal, a reliable *Vakil* of Fateh Khan, was also sent to the *Maharaja's* court in December 1811⁴²³ for a join venture thereby increasing the incentive to launch the Kashmir expedition. Maharaja Ranjit Singh assured the envoy of Fateh Khan of his help.

Fateh Khan and the *Maharaja* met each other in an interview at Rohtas⁴²⁴ and made a deal. Ranjit Singh agreed to help Fateh Khan with 12,000 troops under Diwan Mohkam Chand⁴²⁵ and to facilitate an Afghan march through Rajauri over Pir Panjal range. In return the *Maharaja* was to be aided by a detachment of the Afghans against Multan and nine lakhs from the spoils of Kashmir.⁴²⁶ N.K. Sinha and G.S. Chhabra both, on the authority of a letter written to Fateh Khan by

⁴²⁰ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1933, p.45.

⁴²¹ Amarnath *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 60; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 94.

⁴²² H.L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra (eds.), *Events at the court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, Monograph No. 17, Patiala, 1988 (reprint), p.57.

⁴²³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 111; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 60.

⁴²⁴ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p.431; H.L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra (eds.), *Events at the court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, p. 82; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 94; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 211.

⁴²⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 499.

⁴²⁶ Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, Vo. III, London, 1834, p.237; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, Patiala, 1970 (reprint), p. 7; Debi Parsad, *Gulshan-i-Punjab*, Lucknow, 1850 and 1872 (Punjabi Translation), Harminder Singh Kohli, Patiala, 2003, p. 22.

the *Maharaja* in April 1813, say that Ranjit Singh had demanded one third of the booty, one third of the Kashmir territory, and assistance in the conquest of Multan.⁴²⁷ Sohan Lal Suri gives a different view. In the course of negotiations for peace after the battle on the Chhuchh plains, the *Maharaja* informed Godar Mal, the Afghan *Vakil*, that in order to observe the terms of friendship, they should pay fixed portion of the large sums per annum from the revenues of Kashmir and according to their former promises, they should secure Multan for him and when these two conditions were fulfilled, the fort of Attock would be handed over to them.⁴²⁸

Another contemporary source, *Events at the Court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1810-1817)*, in a more explicit account about the conditions of agreement, refers to a communication addressed to Fateh Khan by Ranjit Singh in April 1813, "In the past the noble Sarkar and he had met together at Rohtasgarh where mutual agreement had taken place that if he would look carefully into what was agreed to in writing and decide to abide by it honestly he would not like to break his promises in the manner in which he had done, that if he had a mind to maintain firm relations he must first get the fort of Multan evacuated and surrender it to the noble Sarkar and should also establish and recognize the Government of the noble Sarkar over one third of the country of Kashmir and also yield one-third of whatever treasure, property and other things had been seized by him from Kashmir, in accordance with the terms of that agreement. It further stated that if he agreed to abide by these terms genuinely the noble Sarkar would evacuate the fort of Attock, and hand it

⁴²⁷ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 46; G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p.57; According to Fakir Syed Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, p. 87. Wazir Fateh Khan had offered the *Maharaja* "half the loot and nine lakhs of rupees for his help in capturing Kashmir".

⁴²⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 197.

over to him."⁴²⁹ Thus it is clear from the Sikh version that the contract between Fateh Khan and Ranjit Singh included for the latter a portion of the territory of Kashmir, a share in the spoils from the valley and the possession of Multan.

The forces of the Lahore *Darbar* to the tune of 12000 men,⁴³⁰ under the command of Sardar Dal Singh Naherna, Jiwan Singh Pindiwala and chiefs of Jasrota, Basoli, Haripur, Nurpur and Raja Sansar Chand's forces started for Kashmir. They were under the overall command of Diwan Mohkam Chand.⁴³¹ During the first week of December 1812 the combined forces of the *Sikhs* and the Afghans marched from Jehlam for the invasion of Kashmir. The snow-fall at the Pir Panjal Range hindered the advance, the *Sikhs* not being accustomed to such climatic conditions their advance in the snow-clad hills was impeded. The *Wazir*, who did not want the *Sikhs* to play any important part in this expedition, took advantage of it and without informing the *Diwan*, kept on advancing. The *Diwan* had suspected Fateh Khan's intentions and had accordingly apprised the *Maharaja*, but the latter wanted to keep his promise till it was broken by the other party. The clever *Diwan*, however did not give in and thought of some other means of rapid advance. He promised the Raja of Rajauri a *Jagir* worth Rs. 25,000 if he would show him a pass through which he might reach the valley at the same time as Fateh Khan. The *Diwan* succeeded in entering the valley with a handful of soldiers under the command of Jodh Singh Kalsia and Nihal Singh Attari. When Ata Mohammad came to know of the joint invasion of Kashmir by the Afghans and the *Sikhs*, he decided to face them, near the

⁴²⁹ H.L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra (eds.), *Events at the court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, p. 82.

⁴³⁰ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 7; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 329.

⁴³¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 126; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 95; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 61; W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 169 ; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 499.

fort of Shergarh, where Shah Shuja was interned.⁴³² It was bitter cold and the Sikh soldiers were not in a position to acquit themselves properly. One hundred foot soldiers and one hundred horsemen perished in the encounter.⁴³³ At one stage of the expedition, Ata Mohammad Khan had even offered to join the *Sikhs* with all his valuables and cash if they agreed to render assistance to him. The *Diwan* did not accede to his offer, though he shifted his headquarters to a distance and intimated the *Maharaja* about the offer, who might have refused it.⁴³⁴ The *Sikh* and Afghan forces, ultimately jointly took possession of the fort.⁴³⁵ The allies got a huge booty from the fort. Ata Muhammad surrendered the fort. Diwan Mohkam Chand released Shah Shuja and took him back along with him to Lahore.⁴³⁶ Kashmir was captured but Fateh Khan showed no eagerness to give the promised share of the spoils. The *Diwan* had to return to Lahore in disgust, but he managed to secure the person of Shah Shuja. When the *Diwan* and his army were returning to Lahore, Fateh Khan treacherously dispatched a force to attack them. But the Lahore army's pace was too fast for the Afghan and he failed to over take the former.

The *Maharaja* had been outwitted by the *Wazir* in this campaign and it had cost him Rs. 6,70,000 and many lives. But this expedition did not prove to be absolutely futile. In fact it acquainted the *Maharaja* with the terrain and geographical conditions of the country. His best general had carried out a successful reconnaissance. He had also extrapolated

⁴³² Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 212.

⁴³³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 128.

⁴³⁴ H.L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra, (eds.), *Events at the court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, p. 124.

⁴³⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 128; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 500.

⁴³⁶ W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 169; Wazir Fateh Khan had demanded the delivery of Shah Shuja to himself and had been threatened to use force for this purpose. But, Diwan Mohkam Chand defied the *Wazir*, held on to the person of Shah Shuja and marched towards Lahore; Fakir Syed Waheediuddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, p. 88.

local knowledge of the country which helped the *Maharaja* to plan and execute his subsequent campaigns for the capture of Kashmir. Secondly Diwan Mohkam Chand was able to procure for the *Maharaja* the person of Shah Shuja, the owner of the famous *Kohinoor* diamond. Thirdly, the possession of Shah Shuja's person enabled Ranjit Singh to use him for his own political ends. Fourthly, the Lahore *Darbar* had also sized up the quality and strength of the Afghans, which stood them in good stead during the battle of Attock.

In 1813, Diwan Mohkam Chand occupied the fort of Attock. The strong fort of Attock was situated on the bank of river Indus. It had been considered as a passage to the north-western frontier passes and routes. It was under the control of Jahandad Khan, the brother of Ata Muhammad Khan, the Governor of Kashmir.⁴³⁷ Ranjit Singh had studied its strategic advantage and was convinced that unless it was captured by him the continual tide of the invaders from across the frontier could not be checked. Ranjit Singh was negotiating with Jahandad Khan for the possession of Attock even before the decision was taken regarding the joint Sikh-Afghan expedition to Kashmir. Jahandad Khan, now felt that after the conquest of Kashmir it was his turn to be ousted from the fort by Wazir Fateh Khan.⁴³⁸ He knew his limitations and clearly felt that he was no match for Shah Mahummud and his Wazir Fateh Khan. He approached Ranjit Singh and agreed to surrender the fort on the condition that he would be given proper assistance. Ranjit Singh immediately offered the *Pargna* of Wazirabad as a *Jagir* for Jahandad Khan⁴³⁹ and dispatched his army under the command of Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, Sardar Mit Singh Bharania, Diwan Bhawani Das and Sukhdayal to

⁴³⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 500.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid*; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. I, p. 8.

⁴³⁹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 138; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 500.

take charge of the fort of Attock.⁴⁴⁰ According to Alexander Burnes, "Ranjit Singh obtained Attock at the small sacrifice of a lakh of rupees and prepared to defend his acquisition."⁴⁴¹ Jahandad Khan's Afghan force in the fort was in arrears of pay to the tune of one lakh rupees which Ranjit Singh's men paid and occupied the fort.⁴⁴² The *Maharaja* obtained the fort of Attock and got grains of 3510 maunds (1400 quintals), ammunition 439 maunds (170 quintals), guns, mortars and surivels of 70 pieces and rock salt and tobacco 235 maunds (93 quintals).⁴⁴³ Thus the *Maharaja* got this fort of strategic importance very cheaply. Maharaja Ranjit Singh honoured Diwan Mohkam Chand with a Kalgi, sword and *Khillat* for his feat.⁴⁴⁴ This negotiation between Jahandad Khan and the *Maharaja* was kept secret from Fateh Khan. When Fateh Khan came to know about it he was highly agitated and annoyed.⁴⁴⁵ The *Maharaja* declared that, "It was caused by his own breach of faith, in not fulfilling terms of their agreement and paying the expenses of Diwan Mohkam Chand's contingent."⁴⁴⁶ Fateh Khan sent a detachment to attack the *Sikh* army under Mohkam Chand at that time retiring from Kashmir but the latter marched too rapidly to be overtaken.⁴⁴⁷ Mohkam Chand's retreat was through Baramulla-Rajauri-Bhimbur route. Handing over the charge of Kashmir to his brother Azim Khan, Fateh Khan reached Peshawar and sent a message to Ranjit Singh to evacuate the fort of Attock.⁴⁴⁸ But the *Maharaja* refused to evacuate

⁴⁴⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 131; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 99.

⁴⁴¹ Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, Vol. III, p. 238.

⁴⁴² Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 213; Jahandad Khan sold the fort of Attock for two lakh of Rupees

to Ranjti Singh, *Calcutta Review*, Vol. I, May-December, 1844, London, 1881, p. 481.

⁴⁴³ Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1919, p. 30.

⁴⁴⁴ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 108.

⁴⁴⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 131.

⁴⁴⁶ *Calcutta Review*, Vol. I, May-December, 1844, p. 481.

⁴⁴⁷ *Foreign Department; Political Proceeding*, 23rd April 1813, No.11, Para I, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

⁴⁴⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 138.

it. The fort of Attock was held by Daya Singh and Diwan Devi Das with him.

Wazir Fateh Khan accompanied by Dost Muhammad Khan, Duni Beg Khan and Samad Khan marched towards Attock and encamped at a distance of 24 kos from Attock. But they did not advance further. Here, Fateh Khan collected a large number of Afghans to participate in the coming *Jehad*. Mahmud Shah's troops under Shahzada Ayub and Abbas had arrived and were located on the west of the Indus. The *Maharaja* was fully aware of the gravity of the situation. When the Sardars offered him *nazar* he refused to accept it till the conquest of Multan.⁴⁴⁹

There were negotiations for the settlement between Mohkam Chand and Wazir Fateh Khan, but they proved to be abortive. The Afghan army was not strong enough to lay siege to the fort and reinforcements from Lahore continued coming. By the month of May, the fight seemed imminent. Dost Mohammad, a brother of the *Wazir* of Kabul, at the head of 4,000 cavalry, tried to disrupt the transportation of grain, gunpowder and ammunition to the fort which had been dispatched from Lahore. As a retaliatory measure, a vanguard was dispatched from Lahore to restore these channels of transportation.

The main contingent of troops under Diwan Mohkam Chand alongwith Kanwar Kharak Singh and Bhai Ram Singh was dispatched from Lahore and it reached Rawalpindi in the first week of June.⁴⁵⁰ The presence of the seasoned general like Diwan Mohkam Chand was imperative in the area infested by the Afghan cavalry. The troops of Fateh Khan had already invaded Hasan Abdal and defeated a body of the Sikh troops under Ram Singh. The arrival of the veteran general brought

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H.L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra (eds.), *Events at the court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, p. 53.

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Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol.II, p. 510; W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 170.

about a rapid and complete turn around in the situation. He advanced with the troops from Saraikala to Hasan Abdal and was around the middle of June at a distance of five or six kos from the army of Fateh Khan. Both the Sikh and Afghan forces were poised face to face for three months without any action. During this period frequent skirmishes took place between the two forces. On one particular day a Sikh party during their reconnaissance sighted the enemy camp and attacked it. A fierce battle took place lasting the whole day but ended without any tangible or conclusive results. The clever Mohkam Chand avoided a general battle and bided his time till the Afghans were exhausted of their supplies. With his personality, initiative, energy and resourcefulness Diwan Mohkam Chand had changed the situation in his own favour. It was apparent that he was now determined to give a fight as he deployed his forces for the battle at a place called Haidru, five miles from the fort of Attock. Hari Ram Gupta mention the *Diwan* organised his cavalry into four divisions in the form of a square, each side containing 2,000 men. The infantry battalion of 2,000 men was in the centre of the square. He was head of the infantry on an elephant, on whose back on both sides of the *Diwan* two light cannon were tied with gunners to fire.⁴⁵¹ Ghaus Khan with his artillery corps was lingering in the rear away from the battlefield.

With the permission of the *Maharaja* the Sikh forces attacked the Afghans on July 12, 1813⁴⁵² at Hazro, about 8 kilometers from Attock. This battle is also known as the battle of Chhuchh. A terrible fighting took place between the adversaries. In the meantime Afghans received fresh reinforcements under Dost Muhammad Khan.⁴⁵³ The *Diwan* left his

⁴⁵¹ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, pp. 110-11

⁴⁵² Murray, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 13; Cunningham *History of the Sikhs*, p. 138. Agrees with this date; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. V, p. 101, mention Ranjit Singh got the news of this battle on 12 July 1813, from a letter sent from Pind Dadan Khan by Sukh Dayal, agent of Rama Nand Sahu, stating that the battle was fought on 9th July 1813. According to N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 50. This battle took place on June 26, 1813.

⁴⁵³ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 13.

elephant, mounted a horse and personally leading his reserves fell upon the disorganized Afghans⁴⁵⁴. Hand to hand fighting took place and there were heavy losses on both sides. Diwan Amar Nath mentions that 2,000 Afghans were killed.⁴⁵⁵ Dost Muhammad was seriously wounded. Many Afghans drowned in the Indus and a large number were taken prisoners. The Sikhs plundered the provisions of the Afghans. Besides Diwan Mohkam Chand, Jodh Singh Kalsia and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Sardar Dal Singh, Diwan Ram Dayal also took part in fighting against Afghans at Hazro.⁴⁵⁶ Fateh Khan fled away to Peshawar.⁴⁵⁷ Thus the victory for the Sikhs was complete. The credit for this major triumph goes to the dynamic generalship of Diwan Mohkam Chand. Hukam Singh Chimni was appointed *Qiladar* of the fort of Attock.⁴⁵⁸

Hugel writes about this battle, "The Muhammadan power was already on the decline in India and unimportant battle of Attock only above the last bands over the Indus."⁴⁵⁹ This seems to be a totally misleading estimate of the battle. The importance of this battle is immense. It should not be underestimated. This was the first pitched battle between the Sikhs and the Afghans and was fought to decide the issue of the possession of the fort of Attock. The importance of the battle lies in the fact that it was the first real and decisive Punjabi victory over the Afghans, "who from the time began to entertain a dread of their (Sikhs) prowess."⁴⁶⁰

As a result of the battle of Hazro the Lahore *Darbar* established a strong and permanent control over Attock. According to Khushwant

⁴⁵⁴ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 220.

⁴⁵⁵ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 74.

⁴⁵⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 160

⁴⁵⁷ Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 155.

⁴⁵⁸ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 86; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 156.

⁴⁵⁹ Charles Baron Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, London, 1845, p. 215.

⁴⁶⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 397.

Singh, "It was the first victory the Punjabi's had ever won over the Afghans and the Pathans. The fort of Attock had been wrested from the Hindu Raja Jaipal in A.D. 1002 by Muhmud Ghazni and since then had remained in the hands of the invaders. Its capture meant the liberation of Northern India from the Pathan and Afghan menace."⁴⁶¹

When the second expedition was sent against Kashmir in 1814, Mohkam Chand, who was now very old and suffered from the failing health of senility, was not allowed to accompany the expedition. He died on October 29, 1814, on Saturday, at Phillaur.⁴⁶² He left behind an illustrious son Moti Ram, and grand-sons Diwan Kirpa Ram and Ram Dyal who too rendered meritorious services to the Sikh State. He was arguably one of the ablest Generals of Ranjit Singh. Diwan Mohkam Chand was the most loyal, devoted and trustworthy of his subordinates. He was one of the architects of the Sikh empire who rose by dint of merit to the post of *Diwan* and virtually the commander-in-chief of the Sikh forces. N.K. Sinha observes. "As a general, he was uniformly successful and from 1806 to 1814 the annexation of Ranjit Singh was due not only to his irresistible cunning but also to Mohkam Chand's military talents."⁴⁶³ Ranjit Singh always held him in high esteem. He had a sound knowledge of military tactics and strategy. He did not suffer a defeat; he was an ever victorious General.

Misr Diwan Chand was another of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's brave Generals. He was worked as a clerk in the *Topkhana* of Main Ghaus Khan. Due to his efficiency and loyalty his states was increased and he was appointed as *Naib* (Assistant) incharge of artillery. In 1814, after the

⁴⁶¹ Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs (1469-1839)*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1999, (IInd Edition), p. 235.

⁴⁶² Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 85; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 172.

⁴⁶³ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 174.

death of Mian Ghaus Khan, Misr Diwan Chand was appointed on his post by the *Maharaja* as a chief of artillery or ordnance department.⁴⁶⁴ In the beginning the artillery was mixed affair. It was called *Topkhana Jinsi* or mixed batteries, having guns driven by horses, bullocks and camels. In 1814 Artillery was divided into four sections: 1. *Topkhana Fili* or Elephant Batteries, 2. *Topkhana Shutri* or Camel swivels or Zamburaks, 3. *Topkhana Aspi* or Horse Batteries, 4. *Topkhana Gavi* or Bullock Batteries

Misr Diwan Chand remained the head of Artillery until his death in 1825. He was the commander-in-chief of many significant battles, such as battle of Multan fought in 1818; the battle of Kashmir in 1819; expedition against Sada Kaur in 1820; battle of Naushera in 1823 and many more. He also participated in a few minor campaigns. After the death of Diwan Mohkam Chand, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was convinced that Misr Diwan Chand could fulfill the gap left by the late Diwan Mohkam Chand.

From 1802 to 1818 Multan was invaded seven times by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. During his first six expeditions he accepted *Nazrana* from Nawab Muzzaffar Khan and returned back. Misr Diwan Chand took part in the fifth and seventh expeditions only. In February 1816, the *Maharaja* sent the fifth expedition to conquer Multan under the command of Misr Diwan Chand. Maharaja Ranjit Singh also despatched to Multan a small force under Akali Phoola Singh. The *Maharaja* demanded a lakh and twenty thousand rupees as *Nazrana*. The Sikh army under Misr Diwan Chand besieged the fort of Ahmadabad which the Khalsa army soon occupied.⁴⁶⁵ The Nawab assessing the situation as

⁴⁶⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 164; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 81; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 124.

⁴⁶⁵ Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, p. 107.

unfavourable accepted Sikh demand of *Nazrana*. He paid a *Nazrana* of eighty thousand rupees immediately and promised to pay the remaining amount of forty thousand within the next two or three months.⁴⁶⁶

The sixth expedition was sent under the command of Diwan Bhawani Das in 1817. The expedition proved to be a total failure, and Diwan was appropriately punished.⁴⁶⁷ In 1818, Maharaja Ranjit Singh made elaborate preparations for the final conquest of Multan. The charge of this expedition was given to Misr Diwan Chand.

On January 14, 1818, a massive force comprising 25,000 men under the nominal leadership of Kanwar Kharak Singh, but in reality commanded by Misr Diwan Chand was sent to Multan.⁴⁶⁸ The jealousy of *Jagirdars*, who objected to serve under a man of yesterday, obliged Ranjit Singh to adopt the plan of sending his heir-apparent in nominal command of the whole contingent.⁴⁶⁹ The *Maharaja* gave instructions to the Kanwar that he would work according to the advice of the Misr Diwan Chand and nothing was to be done against his advice.⁴⁷⁰ The prominent Generals like Ram Dayal, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Abdus Samad Khan, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Bhawani Das and Kanwar Kharak Singh were included in this expedition.⁴⁷¹ Artillery which had to play major role in reducing the fort, was under the command of General Ilahi Bakhsh. The *Bhangi* Cannon, *Zam-Zama* was also ordered to proceed. Ranjit Singh made several preparations for this expedition. The charge of maintaining a free flow of food grains and war material was entrusted to Kanwar Kharak Singh's mother Rani Datar Kaur, popularly known as Mai Nakkain, who set up her head quarters at Kot Nau.⁴⁷² Ranjit Singh

⁴⁶⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 206; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 139.

⁴⁶⁷ W.L. Mc'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 179.

⁴⁶⁸ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 31; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p.519.

⁴⁶⁹ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 31.

⁴⁷⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p.519.

⁴⁷¹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 168-169.

⁴⁷² Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 238.

thus issued his orders to Misr Diwan Chand, the leader of the Multan expedition, "Give the Multan *Vakils* a frank reply that it is my intention to occupy Multan and so they should not talk of the giving of *Nazrana*".⁴⁷³

On the other side, Muzaffar Khan, had also made large scale preparations to confront the invader. In order to obtain help from fanatic *Muslims*, he raised the cry of *Jehad*⁴⁷⁴ and collected over 20,000 fanatic Muslims (ghazis) under his green banner. He even tried to get the support of the British and the neighbouring *Muslim* chieftains but in vain. Now the Nawab had to depend mostly on his own resources and on the fanaticism of Ghazis. The Nawab collected large quantities of arms, ammunitions and other provisions in the fort of Multan.

On his way to Multan, Misr Diwan Chand took the fort of Khangarh and Muzaffargarh and reached Multan in the first week of February.⁴⁷⁵ Nawab as usual, offered to pay a tribute if the Sikh army returned to Lahore but this time the *Maharaja* was determined to capture Multan. The battle of Multan was fought in three phases. In the first phase the countryside around Multan was to be occupied. In the second phase the Sikhs under Diwan Moti Ram closely besieged the town of Multan which was defended by Nawab Muzaffar Khan with great vigour.⁴⁷⁶ With the bombardment of the fort by the Lahore troops the battle of Multan entered the last phase in March. A considerable number of Sikh soldiers were killed. The pathans fled and enclosed themselves within the fort. The Nawab had an army of only 2,000 men⁴⁷⁷ but the fort was very well defended and arrangement were made in such a way that even if the

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 240; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 169.

⁴⁷⁴ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 249.

⁴⁷⁵ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 168.

⁴⁷⁶ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 411.

⁴⁷⁷ C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 83.

siege lasted several months the provisions would not get exhausted. The great *Zamzama* cannon was now in active deployment. Maharaja Ranjit Singh repeatedly wrote to Misr Diwan Chand, forbidding him to run any risk, for he had not yet recovered the losses he had sustained in his Kashmir expedition. The object of the *Maharaja* was to compel Muzaffar Khan to surrender through discretion and coercion and not exclusively through force. Misr Diwan Chand communicated an order to the Nawab consenting to accept a *Jagir* of Shujabad which he had been previously offered⁴⁷⁸. Nawab agreed to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's proposal. Kanwar Kharak Singh sent Diwan Bhawani Das, Punjab Singh, Qutab-ud-Din Khan former Nawab of Kasur and Chaudhary Qadar Bakhsh to the Nawab to contract the proposed agreement.⁴⁷⁹ However, the Nawab's forces refused to surrender. According to Sohan Lal Suri, the Nawab changed his mind under an inspiration from his officers who had aroused his spirit of self-respect.

ਹਮ ਹੈ ਪਠਾਨ, ਮਾਨੇ ਔਰ ਕੀ ਨਾ ਆਨ,

ਲੜੇ ਮਰੇ ਜੋ ਲਉ ਪਰਾਨ, ਸਦਾ ਆਦਿ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ।⁴⁸⁰

The Bombardment was resumed and went on till 2nd June. Ilahi Bakhsh's artillery was able to effect two breaches in the wall of the fort but failed to enter the fort. However, on the midnight of June 2nd a party of *Akalis* under the command of Sadhu Singh⁴⁸¹ entered the fort through one of the breaches in Khizri gate, risking their own lives. He was followed by the Sikh troops. Hand to hand fighting took place, the noise and commotion emanating from which was remembered for many decades thereafter. The Nawab and his five sons were killed in the

⁴⁷⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 247; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*., Vol. II, p. 520.

⁴⁷⁹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 247; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 156.

⁴⁸⁰ Sita Ram Kohli (ed.), *Fatehnama Guru Khalsa Ji Ka*, Patiala, 1952, p. 61.

⁴⁸¹ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*., p. 115. Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in the Kashmir and Punjab*, p. 378; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 157; C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 84.

battlefield, his sixth son was wounded severely in the face and two accepted the offer of peace for surrender and were saved. The fort of Multan was captured on 2nd June 1818. The citadel was now sacked and an immense booty fell to the troops engaged in the assault. Sukhdial, who was appointed the first *Nazim* of Multan was ordered to get the fort repaired by investing Rs. 3000 per day.⁴⁸² Misr Diwan Chand returned to Lahore, leaving in the fort a garrison of 600 men under the command of Sardar Jodh Singh Kalsia and Dal Singh Naharana. The Victor Misr Diwan Chand was honoured with the title of *Zafar Zang*⁴⁸³ a brave victor of the battles and was granted a *Jagir* of Rs. 25,000 in addition to a present of a valuable *Khillat* of one lakh.⁴⁸⁴ Ali-ud-Din Mufti describes the title of Misr as *Khair Khwah, ba bafa, Zafar Zang, Fateh Nasib, Misr Diwan Chand Bahadur* (well wisher, honourable, conqueror in war, Main of victorious destiny, Misr Diwan Chand the Brave).⁴⁸⁵ Some more pairs of gold bangles were given to those who had outstanding achievements in the battle to their credit.⁴⁸⁶ The *Jagir* of Sarakpur was granted to the Sarfraz Khan the captured son of Muzaffar Khan.⁴⁸⁷ After the conquest of Multan, Maharaja Ranjit Singh subdued the chiefs of Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan and Mankera and it opened up the road to Sindh.

Misr Diwan Chand's name is also associated with the conquest of Kashmir (1819). Maharaja Ranjit Singh had sent expeditions to Kashmir in 1812 under the command of Diwan Mohkam Chand and in 1814

⁴⁸² Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 102.

⁴⁸³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 253; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 522; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 99; Raja Ram Tota, *Gulashat-i-Punjab*, MS M/790, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, (Punjabi Translation) Amarvant Singh, p. 119.

⁴⁸⁴ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 522; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp. 317-18, Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 114.

⁴⁸⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 557.

⁴⁸⁶ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 102.

⁴⁸⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 259; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Kitab-i-Hind*, p. 93; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 174; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 251-252.

under Diwan Ram Dayal but he had failed to conquer Kashmir. The *Maharaja* on his part was very keen to conquer Kashmir. After the conquest of Multan (1818) Ranjit Singh diverted his full attention towards the coveted valley of Kashmir. Misr Diwan Chand the hero conqueror of Multan, was appointed commander-in-chief of the Sikh army.⁴⁸⁸ In the beginning of May 1819 a huge army got assembled at Wazirabad and was divided into three parts. The first was placed under the combined command of Misr Diwan Chand, Sham Singh Attariwala, Sardar Hari Singh, Jagat Singh Attariwala, Jawala Singh and Rattan Singh; the second under Kanwar Kharak Singh and the third under the command of the Maharaja himself who stayed back at Wazirabad as a reserved force.

The force marched, towards the valley of Kashmir through different routes. Misr Diwan Chand reached Bhimbur in May and left his heavy artillery at Bhimbur, carrying only light guns with him.⁴⁸⁹ By the beginning of June, Misr Diwan Chand had occupied Rajauri and Punchh, and all the hills and passes south of the Pir Panjal range.⁴⁹⁰ From Rajauri, Misr Diwan Chand informed the *Maharaja* that Agar Khan (Raja of Rajauri) had rendered valuable assistance. The entire Sikh force of 12,000 took up their position at Serai Ali, leading to Supin. Misr Diwan Chand let his tired force rest for few days. Meanwhile the *Maharaja* himself arrived at Shahbad to see the arrangements and found that supply position was in perfect order. Here a battle was fought between the Sikhs and the Afghan. Governor of Kashmir, Jabbar Khan with 12,000 horseman and foot soldiers at his command. The Afghans fought

⁴⁸⁸. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 178; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 4; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama.*, Vol. II, p. 527; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 290; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 105; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 40.

⁴⁸⁹ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 347.

⁴⁹⁰ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 51.

well and were also able to capture two of the Sikh guns. Akali Phoola Singh came into his own and fell upon the Afghans. Jabbar Khan was seriously wounded, fled first to Srinagar and then through Bhimbur escaped to Peshawar.⁴⁹¹ According to Cunningham it was almost a bloodless victory.⁴⁹² On entering the city the soldiers started plundering it but Misr Diwan Chand stopped it with an iron hand.⁴⁹³ After its conquest, Kashmir was put under military rule for some time. Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala and Sardar Jawala Singh were made heads of Baramulla and Misr Diwan Chand of Kashmir. Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself left for Lahore. After some time Diwan Devi Das inform the Maharaja that the administration of Kashmir was not in perfect order. Thereafter, the Maharaja recalled Misr Diwan Chand from Kashmir. On the 5th July Diwan Moti Ram was appointed Governor of Kashmir Province⁴⁹⁴ and Diwan Devi Das was to be the Chief of the settlement of Kashmir. Misr Diwan Chand having settled the country, left Moti Ram incharge of Kashmir and reached Lahore. The *Maharaja* was so pleased with the conquest of Kashmir that he awarded Misr Diwan Chand with the title of *Fateh-o-Nusrat Nasib* and also granted him a *Jagir* with 50,000 rupees and a valuable *Khillat*.⁴⁹⁵

On 25th of July, 1819 Misr Diwan Chand was sent with artillery to Mankera to exact *Nazrana*. He succeeded in getting *Nazrana* of a Lakh and 80,000 rupees from the Governor of Mankera and returned to Lahore.⁴⁹⁶

After this, Misr Diwan Chand alongwith Diwan Moti Ram and Attariwala Sardars was sent to punish the *Zamindars* of Punchh, Khakhi

⁴⁹¹ W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 185.

⁴⁹² Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 143.

⁴⁹³ Gulcharan Singh, "The Kashmir Campaigns of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, XVII (i), April 1983, p. 43.

⁴⁹⁴ W.L. Mc'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 185; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p.529.

⁴⁹⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 312.

⁴⁹⁶ W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 187. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Kitab-i-Hind*, p. 96.

and Bhimbur.⁴⁹⁷ Misr Diwan Chand reached Mirpur and laid waste the country, while Moti Ram and the Attariwala Sardars seized some of the Khakhi tribes. The remaining tribes fled to the hills and concealed themselves.

The *Maharaja* sent Misr Diwan Chand to seize the territory of Sada Kaur. The relation between the *Maharaja* and his mother-in-law Sada Kaur had become strained. He accordingly sent to his mother-in-law an order, on October 1820, to set apart half of her own *Jagir* for the maintenance of her two grandsons Sher Singh and Tara Singh⁴⁹⁸ but she was not at all ready for this. In 1821, Misr Diwan Chand and Attariwala Sardars were sent to seize all her territory. Misr Diwan Chand first captured Batala, Pathankot, Mukerian and then marched to Akalgarh, the head quarter of Rani. The fort of Akalgarh was captured and immense wealth of the fort was brought to Lahore by Misr Diwan Chand.⁴⁹⁹

Misr Diwan Chand was sent to various expeditions by the *Maharaja* from time to time. In 1817, he was sent to deal with the Nawab of Mitha Tiwana. On his advent, the Nawab Ahmad Yar Khan shut himself in the fort of Nurpur. He offered some resistance to the *Misr* but could not withstand the seize for long and fled to Mankera. Misr Diwan Chand occupied the fort.⁵⁰⁰

On 25 November, 1821 Misr Diwan Chand alongwith Diwan Kirpa Ram captured the fort of Bhakher without firing a shot and occupied Khangarh, Leigh and Mangarh without facing any opposition. During the

⁴⁹⁷ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 151; W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, pp. 188-189; W. Moorcraft and G. Trebeck, *Travels in Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab in Ladak and Kashmir in Peshawar, Kabul and Kunduz and Bokhara from 1819-1825*, New Delhi, 1986 (reprint), pp. 436-437.

⁴⁹⁸ H. T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 101.

⁴⁹⁹ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 278.

⁵⁰⁰ G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab As a Sovereign State 1799-1839*, p. 109; Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, Sujlana Publishers, Jalandhar, 1949, p.51.

same year, Ranjit Singh sent an army under Misr Diwan Chand against Dera Ismail Khan and Mankera.⁵⁰¹ Nawab Hafiz Muhammad Khan of Mankera had earlier helped the Tiwana chief Ahmad Yar Khan. Mankera was a well defended fortress but after a siege of 25 days the embattled Nawab surrendered.⁵⁰² Misr Diwan Chand was made the Governor of Dera Ismail Khan.⁵⁰³

In 1821, The *Maharaja* sent Misr Diwan Chand to take action against Nara *Zamindars* the murderers of Sardar Amar Singh Majithia.⁵⁰⁴ He also took part in the battle of Peshawar in 1823.⁵⁰⁵ Mohammad Azim Khan called upon the Afghans of Peshawar and Attock to unite under his banner and wage a *Jehad* (a religious war) against the Sikhs in order to recapture all the lost Afghan territories. On the other side, Ranjit Singh sent forth a big force against Azim Khan. This force was led by Kanwar Kharak Singh. The *Maharaja* also detached the galaxy of generals: Misr Diwan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Desa Singh Majithia and Attar Singh Sandhawalia. He was also sent on missions Allard, Ventara, Gurkhas and Balbhadra, with their newly trained battalions. An appeal was even made to the *Akalis* to join these combined forces against the coming danger from the side of the Afghans. No doubt, "the fanaticism of the *Akalis* was pitted against the fanaticism of the Ghazis."⁵⁰⁶ The battle was actually fought on March 14, 1823, at a place known as Naushera. The *Akalis* were led by Phula Singh and under his command they fought dauntlessly and aggressively. Though Akali Phula Singh was killed while fighting even so, the Sikhs emerged victorious.

⁵⁰¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 241.

⁵⁰² Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 207; *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series Punjab*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1908, p. 205.

⁵⁰³ *District Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh 1883-84*, p. 39.

⁵⁰⁴ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 130.

⁵⁰⁵ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 210.

⁵⁰⁶ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 62.

Indeed the victory of the Sikhs in this battle sounded the death-knell of Afghan supremacy beyond the river Indus.⁵⁰⁷ It consolidated Ranjit Singh's power in the territories between Indus and Peshawar. The *Maharaja* sent Misr Diwan Chand occasionally to receive *Nazrana* from these territories. He regularly received *Nazrana* from Sialkot,⁵⁰⁸ Mankera.⁵⁰⁹ He was also sent to conquer Sahiwal.⁵¹⁰

Another General whose bravery was beyond question was Diwan Ram Dayal. He was grandson of Diwan Mohkam Chand and son of Diwan Moti Ram. Like his grandfather he was an expert in military activities. He was employed on a number of minor campaigns. Such as the campaign against Kashmir in 1814 and conquest of Kashmir in 1819, campaign against Multan in 1817, against Hazara in 1820 and many more. He is described as a brave leader of the Khalsa Army.⁵¹¹ He led a very important and difficult expedition against Kashmir in 1814, when he was only twenty two years of age.⁵¹² This expedition was a particularly eventful one and a trying challenge for Diwan Ram Dayal. Diwan Mohkam Chand who had gained a considerable experience of the territory, was the only chief who openly and sincerely advised the king against the launching of this expedition.⁵¹³ He put forward strong arguments in support of his views. He emphasized that the season was not suitable for operations in that territory and that difficulties would be faced as soon as the rains set in. Secondly, the operation would lack administrative support as supplies had not been collected, nor any provisions stocked at Bhimbur or Rajauri. Thirdly, the hostility of the hill

⁵⁰⁷ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Hoshiarpur, p. 121.

⁵⁰⁸ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 164.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 167; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 115.

⁵¹⁰ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 195.

⁵¹¹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, pp. 420-21.

⁵¹² Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 1; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 337.

⁵¹³ Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 140; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 229.

chiefs who had not been adequately subdued was also an important factor to be reckoned with.

But, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was determined in his desire to capture Kashmir. When he saw that Ranjit Singh was not amenable to his suggestions he asked permission to accompany the army. Since Mohkam Chand was now very old and his health was fragile the *Maharaja* desired him to remain at Lahore and preserve order during his absence. Maharaja Ranjit Singh made full preparations for a massive invasion of Kashmir. The Sikh army was first collected at Sialkot and from there reached Rajauri on June 11, 1814. In accordance with the advice of the treacherous Raja Agar Khan of Rajauri, the army was divided into two divisions.⁵¹⁴ A section of the army comprising 30 thousand men, under the command Diwan Ram Dayal, Sardar Dal Singh, Ghaus Khan (Darogha-Top Khana), Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and Sardar Mit Singh Padhania, started for Kashmir.⁵¹⁵ Second section of the army which was larger in number and greater in strength was under the command of the *Maharaja* himself who started for Kashmir valley by a different route. According to Ganesh Das, Aghar Khan of Rajauri treacherously advised Ranjit Singh in favour of the Punchh route. The *Maharaja* reached Punchh suffering immense hardship.⁵¹⁶ Diwan Ram Dayal accompanied by Jiwan Mal, Dal Singh and their contingents, reached Behram Gala⁵¹⁷ and conquered it and established a thana there.⁵¹⁸ Then he took possession of the hills of Pir Panjal.⁵¹⁹ Diwan Ram Dayal was confronted with the forces of Azim Khan, the Governor of Kashmir. There was a

⁵¹⁴ C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 82; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 337.

⁵¹⁵ Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs (1469-1839)*, Vol. I, p.238.

⁵¹⁶ Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p.1; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 71.

⁵¹⁷ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 71; W.L. Mc' Gregor. *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 172.

⁵¹⁸ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 71.

⁵¹⁹ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p.21.

fierce fighting between the forces of Diwan Ram Dayal and Azim Khan, on 24 June 1814. There was another episode of bloody fighting at Shopian. The Afghan opposition was stubborn and what was more unfortunate was that because of rains the Sikh guns could not be fired during the battle. Kanwar Kharak Singh's brave officer Jiwan Mal died fighting there.⁵²⁰ Mit Singh Padhanian also died while fighting and his son Sardar Jawala Singh was given his father's place.⁵²¹ Diwan Ram Dayal acquitted himself very honorably. According to Amarnath two thousand Afghans were killed there.⁵²² At the time of fighting, there was a heavy downpour. Diwan Ram Dayal had consequently to fall back and asked for reinforcements.

The main army under Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself reached Punchh only to find itself exposed to rain and storm. Maharaja Ranjit Singh advanced to Mandi, thence to Tosh Maidan Pass where he found Azim Khan entrenched.⁵²³ Here he heard about the distress of Ram Dayal's detachment. The *Maharaja* had sent five thousand men under Bhai Ram Singh alongwith Diwan Devi Das and Qutab-ud-Din Khan to reinforce Ram Dayal who could not reach there because of incessant rains and the cowardice of Bhai Ram Singh. This careless commander, more anxious to save his own life, indifferent to the interest at stake halted *en route* and making the bad weather an excuse did not move from there. Hence the reinforcement never reached the young *Diwan*. According to Amarnath, Bhai Ram Singh avoided fighting and informed the *Maharaja* that the enemy had an upper hand over the Sikh forces of whom many had been killed and it was in the interest of the Lahore

⁵²⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 165; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 228.

⁵²¹ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 73.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p.20.

Darbar to recall the forces from Kashmir.⁵²⁴ He returned to Rajauri without waiting for a reply from the Maharaja.⁵²⁵ Because of the dereliction of his responsibility, Bhai Ram Singh was suspended from his office⁵²⁶ and also fined him.⁵²⁷ Later, on the recommendations of the crown Kanwar Kharak Singh, he was reinstated on 27 August, 1827.⁵²⁸

The army under the *Maharaja* was stuck up at Rajauri on account of rains. Rahulla Khan the ruler of Punchh, was secretly in league with the Governor of Kashmir. He created more impediments for the Sikh forces. The *Maharaja* had to return from Kashmir to Lahore in August 1814 via Punchh, Kotli and Mirpur.⁵²⁹

Diwan Ram Dayal, short of manpower and supplies was left to his own resources. He handled the situation with such courage and boldness that Muhammad Azim Khan was unable to drive out of his country, this doughty young general at the head of a band of determined men and was obliged to come to terms with him. According to some authoritative accounts the terms offered by Diwan Ram Dayal, and accepted by Azim Khan, were that the former would retire if Azim Khan accepted in writing the 'nominal supremacy' of the Lahore *Darbar*. From the courage, determination and boldness shown by Diwan Ram Dayal, it is quite evident that Azim Khan accepted this condition in order to get rid of the invader whom he had failed to oust by force. According to Amarnath dwelling upon the friendly relations with Diwan Mohkam Chand, grandfather of Diwan Ram Dayal, Azim Khan is said to have considered it worth while to contract cordial relations with Diwan Ram Dayal and the Lahore *Darbar*. He sent valuable presents for the *Maharaja* and assured

⁵²⁴ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 72.

⁵²⁵ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 20.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.* p.74; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 73.

⁵²⁷ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 73.

⁵²⁸ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 74.

⁵²⁹ Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 1.

Diwan Ram Dayal of wishing well of the *Maharaja* and his kingdom.⁵³⁰ Even after a series of disasters which had befallen the expedition Diwan Ram Dayal retrieved matters as far as was possible. Thus he held his own in the Kashmir Valley with such determination that Azim Khan was compelled to come to terms, allowing him safe conduct and even admitting in a written document the supremacy of Lahore.⁵³¹ Diwan Ram Dayal returned to Lahore safe and sound.

Thus the whole expedition returned to Lahore, having lost its best officers and men and being short of everything that constituted its strength and utility as a military body. The *Maharaja* lamented the fact that in the campaign he could not avail himself of his aged Diwan's discretion and judgment, as well as of his skill and valour.⁵³² Everything had come to pass exactly as the old *Diwan* had predicted and the ruler of Lahore rued the political blunder he had committed.

Diwan Ram Dayal had participated in a subordinate capacity in the various campaigns launched for Multan. He had accompanied the 1817 campaign under the command of Diwan Bhawani Das when the force withdrew after collecting a *Nazrana* of rupees sixty-one thousand.⁵³³ He had also taken part in the final campaign for the capture of Multan in 1818.⁵³⁴ He took part in the house-to-house fighting inside the fort and razed most of the houses to the ground. He had captured the Nawab's eldest son Sarfraz Khan, hiding in a cell and brought him to his tent with all honours. When the fort was occupied, Diwan Ram Dayal was appointed to see that the fort was not plundered by the Lahore

⁵³⁰ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.84; H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 85.

⁵³¹ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, pp.54-55.

⁵³² Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 23.

⁵³³ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.87.

⁵³⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 235; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 169; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 2.

soldiers.⁵³⁵ He got all the gates of the fort locked and posted guards on them. He had captured large quantities of the precious stones, jewellery, shawls and other valuable materials. He kept these under safe custody and at the appropriate occasion handed over these articles to the *Maharaja*.

As was the practice, Diwan Ram Dayal was also occasionally sent out for collecting tribute. In 1815, he along with Dal Singh was sent for this tribute hunt towards Multan and Bahawalpur from where he collected a substantial amount⁵³⁶ and in 1818 from Bahawalpur and Mankera.⁵³⁷ Later, when Wazir Fateh Khan crossed the Indus and started collecting tribute from the territory of Multan, Dal Singh was dispatched to drive away the *Wazir*. Diwan Ram Dayal who was already in the vicinity, was instructed to help the Sardar in the venture, he detached a force of 2,000 horses for the purpose. The *Wazir* was driven away, and also convinced of the Khalsa's invincibility.

The same year Diwan Ram Dayal was despatched to Rajauri to punish its chief, Agar Khan, for his treachery during the Kashmir expedition of 1814.⁵³⁸ Agar Khan tried to buy forgiveness, but Diwan Ram Dayal would not heed his terms and sacked and burnt both the town of Rajauri and the palace of the *Raja*. He left behind him a terrible example of royal revenge. He was also sent to receive *Nazrana* from Khangarh and Muzaffargarh.⁵³⁹

The next year Diwan Ram Dayal sent northwards to watch the movements of Fateh Khan, who had joined his brother Azim Khan in

⁵³⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp. 219-20; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.116.

⁵³⁶ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 74; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 162; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 24.

⁵³⁷ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.104.

⁵³⁸ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 79; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 340.

⁵³⁹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 180.

Kashmir. Hukam Singh Chimni was at this time in charge of the Attock fort and it was the endeavour of Diwan Ram Dayal and Hukam Singh Chimni to keep in order the *Muslims* of Hazara and Yusafzai, who had been instigated to revolt by Fateh Khan, and on one occasion Diwan Ram Dayal was all but defeated by them.⁵⁴⁰

In 1819 Diwan Ram Dayal again participated in the final and successful expedition against Kashmir.⁵⁴¹ This time the leader of the Sikh army was Misr Diwan Chand, the conqueror of the division. But because of his other preoccupations and then his advance being impeded by weather, he could not participate in the actual fighting. Little resistance was, however, made. Zabar Khan took flight and the province of Kashmir was annexed by Ranjit Singh to his dominions.

Diwan Ram Dayal was also sent against the Raja of Puncchh in 1819 in order to bring the Raja Zabardast Khan into subjection.⁵⁴² When the Raja saw that he could offer no resistance to the Sikhs under Ram Dayal, he dispatched his son to the Maharaja and all the Zamindars in the direction of Kashmir, likewise presented themselves. On this occasion, the Maharaja received fifty-three lakhs of rupees from these provinces.

When Bhai Makhan Singh was killed in Hazara and Hukam Singh Chimni, the Governor recalled, Diwan Ram Dayal was sent there to restore order.⁵⁴³ This was no easy matter. The tribes had been thoroughly exasperated by the conduct of Hukam Singh and their successes in rebellious activities had given them confidence. The *Maharaja* could not tolerate the rebellion in Hazara and directed Kanwar Sher Singh and Rani Sada Kaur, to proceed to Hazara with a huge force.

⁵⁴⁰ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 83.

⁵⁴¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 313.

⁵⁴² W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 185.

⁵⁴³ Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 6.

They were accompanied by Sardar Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Sardar Sham Singh Attari and Diwan Ram Dayal. This was in January 1820.

The Hazara rebellion was widespread and was not confined to any one part. Sardar Muhammad Khan had provoked the Ghazis to such an extent that they were filled with a revengeful spirit and the atmosphere was surcharged with deep enmity. The Sikh forces had, therefore, an uphill task to accomplish. The entire force was divided and put under different commanders and deployed at Pakhli, Dhamtor, Dharband, Tarbela and Gandgarh.⁵⁴⁴ When Diwan Ram Dayal had penetrated as far as the fort of Gandgarh, he was surrounded by a number of the enemies, the Afghans of Miswari, Srikot, Tarbela, Yusafzai and Swat and was compelled to fight. Through the whole day, the battle was fought against enormous odds by the Sikhs, and at night, completely worn out, they retired to their entrenchments. Last to leave the field was Diwan Ram Dayal.⁵⁴⁵ When he was crossing a *Durah*, the enemy perceiving that he was separated from the main body of the army, made a sudden dash and cut off and surrounded his party.⁵⁴⁶ Even then Diwan Ram Dayal gave tough time to the Afghans at Hazara and died fighting against them in 1820⁵⁴⁷ at the young age of about 28. It was a great loss to the *Khalsa* and gloom was cast in the army's rank and file. He was a rising officer of great promise in the Sikh army.⁵⁴⁸

Thus ended, abruptly the career of this most promising general of the Lahore *Darbar*. Keeping the status and regard of Diwan Moti Ram in mind, the *Maharaja* sent Kanwar Kharak Singh to convey his

⁵⁴⁴ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 115.

⁵⁴⁵ Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 6.

⁵⁴⁶ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 267.

⁵⁴⁷ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 119, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 533; Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashat-i-Punjab*, p. 138.

⁵⁴⁸ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 43.

condolences for his brave and courageous son Diwan Ram Dayal.⁵⁴⁹ The death of Diwan Ram Dayal was a great grief to his father who gave up the Kashmir government and retired to Banaras.⁵⁵⁰ To the *Maharaja*, who had expected still greater achievements from this worthy grandson of the illustrious Diwan Mohkam Chand, his death was a source of deep sorrow.

Diwan Ram Dayal was a capable and a promising general of the Lahore Kingdom. He had distinguished himself in the capture of Multan and in the Kashmir campaign of 1814. During the latter campaign he had saved an awkward situation by his presence of mind and coolness. Although weak in men and material, he had put up a bold stand against an enemy. Diwan Ram Dayal was an outstanding general who successfully conducted the retreat from the Kashmir campaign under the trying conditions of a difficult terrain, bad weather and with his force tired and exhausted. A leader of men, extremely popular with his troops. Diwan Ram Dayal was a rising star who had commanded a division at the age of twenty.

Here we are going to examine the services performed by Diwan Bhawani Das in the military campaigns soon after joining the Lahore *Darbar* under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Although he was the Finance Minister, besides his financial duties he was entrusted with military duties. His military services were also considerable. He joined the expedition to Jammu in 1809,⁵⁵¹ Attock in 1813⁵⁵², Kashmir in 1814⁵⁵³ and 1819⁵⁵⁴ and Kohistan in 1828⁵⁵⁵. He realized the tributes from

⁵⁴⁹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, pp. 456-57; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 330.

⁵⁵⁰ Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashat-i-Punjab*, p. 139.

⁵⁵¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 81.

⁵⁵² *Ibid*, p. 131. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 99.

⁵⁵³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 160.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 305.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 461.

Nakka country in 1809⁵⁵⁶, Kohistan in 1809⁵⁵⁷ and 1810⁵⁵⁸, the Nawab of Multan in 1816⁵⁵⁹ and 1817⁵⁶⁰ and Kohistan in 1823⁵⁶¹. After the cession of the fort of Kangra to Ranjit Singh by Sansar Chand, in 1810, and the reduction of the hill chiefs, Diwan Bhawani Das was sent to collect the tribute from the *Rajas* of Mandi and Suket and Kulu.⁵⁶² He received fifty thousands rupees from Mandi, seventy thousands rupees from Kulu and seventy seven thousands rupees from the *Raja* of Suket respectively.⁵⁶³ In 1809, he was sent with a strong force to Jammu which he annexed to Lahore territory. He also sent against Peshawar and Yusafzai tribes.⁵⁶⁴ After 1810 Ranjit Singh could not pay any attention to Multan for the next many years. During this time he was busy against Attock and Kashmir. Phula Singh Akali was sent against Multan. A band of desperadoes led by him stormed the town and even secured the outworks of the citadel. But when Muzaffar Khan held grimly on and would not capitulate Diwan Bhawani Das, who led this expedition, consented to withdraw on payment of 80,000 rupees.⁵⁶⁵ In 1813, he captured the Haripur hill territory.⁵⁶⁶ In 1816, he was made the chief Diwan to Kanwar Kharak Singh⁵⁶⁷ and was appointed to reduce the territories of Ramgarhia Sardars about Amritsar and Gurdaspur.⁵⁶⁸ The next year he was sent to Jammu to bring the district into order and make it over to Gulab Singh, who had just received the title of *Raja*. In

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 81.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 99.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 205.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 243.

⁵⁶¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 455.

⁵⁶² *Ibid*, p. 99; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 144; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 208.

⁵⁶³ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 324.

⁵⁶⁴ G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, p. 105.

⁵⁶⁵ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 154; According to Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 87, Diwan Bhawani Das got 61 thousand rupees as Nazrana.

⁵⁶⁶ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 336.

⁵⁶⁷ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 28.

⁵⁶⁸ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 288.

1815, June, the *Maharaja* sent Diwan Bhawani Das and Desa Singh Majithia to extract tribute from the Raja of Kulu and Mandi.⁵⁶⁹ In 1817, the Maharaja sent a contingent under Diwan Bhawani Das to realize the stipulated *Nazrana* from the Nawab of Multan.⁵⁷⁰ Due to the hesitant attitude of the Nawab an army was dispatched to conquer Multan which was besieged but soon thereafter the siege was lifted. A couple of towers of the out wall of the town were battered and breaches were caused to the wall at many places. Both Amarnath and Kanhiya Lal mention this expedition was not successful because of the bribes, amounting to ten thousand rupees, accepted by the commander of the expedition, Diwan Bhawani Das.⁵⁷¹ For this failure the *Diwan* was fined Rs. 10,000 by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁵⁷² He imprisoned him and confiscated his property. However, after a few months, on the recommendation of Kanwar Kharak Singh, he was excused and restored to the position.⁵⁷³

Another Hindu who performed his military services in the Lahore *Darbar* was Diwan Ajodhia Parshad. He came to Lahore in 1814. After the study of two years at Lahore he was sent to Kashmir, where he was placed in the military office, on a salary of 1000 rupees per annum.⁵⁷⁴ It needs mention that not much information about his performance in the battle fields is available. It is however known that six months later he was recalled to Lahore. In 1819, he was placed under Ventura and Allard as paymaster of the troops and as a channel of communication between the commanding officers and the *Maharaja*.⁵⁷⁵ Though he was offered the office of his father yet he politely refused and continued to serve with

⁵⁶⁹ W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 175.

⁵⁷⁰ H.L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra (eds.), *Events at the court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, p. 333.

⁵⁷¹ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 88; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 286.

⁵⁷² W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 179.

⁵⁷³ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 286.

⁵⁷⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 124.

⁵⁷⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, p. 203.

Fauj-I-Khas. He was entrusted with the entire administration of this brigade during Ventura's temporary absence to Europe and was warmly praised for his efficient management by the latter on his return.⁵⁷⁶ So ably did he do this, that General Ventura wrote of him in these terms : "On the two occasions that I have been absent on leave in France, Ajodhia Prashad has held the command of the life guards of the Maharaja. I have never had cause to repent appointing him my Deputy, for on my return from France, I have found the troops in as a good condition as if I had been present myself."⁵⁷⁷

Although, Diwan Moti Ram and Diwan Kirpa Ram served Maharaja Ranjit Singh as Governors yet they also participated in minor expeditions. In 1817, Diwan Moti Ram and Kanwar Kharak Singh were instructed to punish the *Zamindars* of Chhib and Bhau.⁵⁷⁸ Diwan Moti Ram took part in the final expedition of Multan in 1818.⁵⁷⁹ In November 1814, the *Maharaja* issued orders to Diwan Moti Ram to settle the affairs beyond Satluj, where Phoola Singh Akali and Tahil Singh were creating disturbances. Diwan Moti Ram by this order settled the affairs.⁵⁸⁰ The *Maharaja* sent Diwan Moti Ram with Dal Singh to receive *Nazrana* from Mandi and Kulu.⁵⁸¹ In 1819, when the tract between Kot Kamlia and Tulamba was infested with dacoits, the *Maharaja* sent Diwan Kirpa Ram and Jawala Singh along with Kanwar Kharak Singh to restore law and order there.⁵⁸² Diwan Moti Ram and his son Diwan Kirpa Ram were sent to Sarai Phillaur to administrate the area on the both banks of satlej. Before their departure to Phillaur they were presented *siropas* by the

⁵⁷⁶ G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, p. 107.

⁵⁷⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 125.

⁵⁷⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp. 174-175 ,177.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 236; Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 100; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 168; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 173; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 132.

⁵⁸¹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 159 mention he received *Nazrana* from Mandi Rs. 50,000.

⁵⁸² Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 318; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 195.

Maharaja.⁵⁸³ Diwan Kirpa Ram was also sent along with Jamadar Khushal Singh and Dhanna Singh Malwai to conquer the fort of Kutlehr which they subjugated.⁵⁸⁴ He also took part in the expedition of Mankera with Misr Diwan Chand.⁵⁸⁵ In 1823, Diwan Kirpa Ram joined the *Maharaja* with the *Doab* forces and took part in the battle of Naushera in which the Afghan forces under Muhammad Azim Khan of Kabul suffered a heavy defeat.⁵⁸⁶ During the same year, in September, Diwan Kirpa Ram was sent against Uzzul Khan. He subdued the country and seized Uzzul Khan and his son and brought them to Lahore.⁵⁸⁷

Lala Karam Chand though he was attached to revenue department was also appointed with Lala Raj Kaur Peshawari, Sardar Dhanna Singh Malwai and Jamadar Khushal Singh to successfully settle the campaigns towards Dera Ghazi Khan.⁵⁸⁸ He also accompanied the expedition of Attock in 1812.⁵⁸⁹

Diwan Devi Das who joined the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809, took part in the ill-fated Kashmir expedition of 1814,⁵⁹⁰ the final expedition in 1819⁵⁹¹ and the expedition of Attock in 1813.⁵⁹² He was also sent to receive the *Nazrana* from the ruler of Mankera.⁵⁹³

Misr Rallia Ram who was made the chief of Custom Department in 1812 joined the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1811. In 1812, Misr Rallia Ram was sent to collect the *Nazrana* from the hill territories.⁵⁹⁴ In 1821 he was sent to reduce Sardar Jai Singh Attariwala who had risen in

⁵⁸³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 360.

⁵⁸⁴ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 228; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 294.

⁵⁸⁵ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 207.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 220; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 542.

⁵⁸⁷ W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 194.

⁵⁸⁸ Harbans Singh (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. II, Patiala, 1996, pp. 234-235.

⁵⁸⁹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 99.

⁵⁹⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 165.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁵⁹² Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 107; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 130.

⁵⁹³ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 155.

⁵⁹⁴ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 233.

revolt.⁵⁹⁵ He reduced his stronghold of Kallar Kahar and compelled him to take shelter with Dost Muhammad, the *Amir* of Kabul.

Misr Sukhraj joined the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a petty officer and rose to be a commander of several battalions of infantry. In 1835, he was elevated to the position of a general⁵⁹⁶ with the command of 4 infantry regiments, a cavalry regiment and 2 troops of artillery.⁵⁹⁷

Another Hindu Lala Sukh Dayal took part in the expedition of Attock in 1812.⁵⁹⁸ In 1835, at Peshawar he had taken possession of some villages in the country of Ghar and included it in the state of the *Maharaja*.⁵⁹⁹ The *Maharaja* remarked about him that "he was a very brave and daring man and granted him an estate of Rs. 10,000 for his maintenance".⁶⁰⁰

In brief, we may conclude that almost all the Hindu Courtiers and Officials who served the Lahore *Darbar* during the life time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, commanded and participated in various principal campaigns as well as in minor campaigns. Their participation in various wars proved fruitful and the credit of the various regions/states which were captured by the Sikh army goes to these officers-particularly to Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Ram Dayal and Diwan Bhawani Das. Lastly it has to be admitted that the less prominent Hindu Courtiers and Officials too contributed to a great extent in the extension and consolidation of the Sikh State under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, especially. Thus their contribution and achievement in the field of military campaigns were not only significant but unforgettable.

⁵⁹⁵ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 47.

⁵⁹⁶ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 211.

⁵⁹⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 267.

⁵⁹⁸ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 99.

⁵⁹⁹ . Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, Part-III, (Eng. Trans) V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1974, p. 220.

⁶⁰⁰ . *Ibid*, p. 229.

CHAPTER-V

CIVIL ADMINISTRATORS

Though most of the Hindu Courtiers and Officials joined Lahore *Darbar* as military personnel, even so a few of them were also asked to look after the civil administration as well, in those regions which had been conquered by the *Maharaja*, such as Jalandhar, Kashmir, Multan etc. So, along with their services in military field they had to perform various duties in civil administration of the Sikh Kingdom as well. Thus, the chapter deal particularly with the services rendered by Diwan Mohkam Chand, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Kirpa Ram, Misr Rup Lal and Diwan Sawan Mal etc. in the civil administration and their services have been examined analytically, of course, keeping in mind their caliber, farsightedness and credibility due to their commitment, modesty, sincerity and loyalty towards Maharaja Ranjit Singh as well as the Lahore *Darbar*.

The Kingdom of Punjab had several divisions and sub divisions of varying sizes. At the primary level there were *Subas* and in areas where there were no *Subas*, there were districts. *The Maharaja* had divided his Kingdom into four provinces: I. *Suba-i-Lahore*- consisting of the territory between the Jehlum and the Sutlej; II. *Suba-i-Multan*, also known as Dar-ul-Aman (the *abode* of peace)- consisting of the present districts of Multan, Muzzaffargarh, Jhang, and parts of Montgomery and Dera Ismail Khan; III *Suba-i-Kashmir*, popularly called Jannat Nazir (Paradise of the Earth); IV *Suba-i-Peshawar* -consisting of the Valley of Peshawar. The large districts⁶⁰¹ which did not really fall under any of these *Subas*

⁶⁰¹ . Such a district was larger than a *Pargna* and smaller than a *Suba*, something intermediate between *Pargna* and the *Suba*. Under the Mughals probably there was no such unit as the *Suba* of Lahore, or any

were Kangra, Jalandhar *Doab*, Majha, Wazirabad, Pind Dadan, Gujrat, Rajauri, Punchh, Hazara, Bannu-Tank, Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Ghazi Khan. His hill principalities were allowed to be continued under vassal Chiefs on specific terms. They paid tributes to the State.

The secondary level units were composed of *Pargnas* which also widely differed in size depending upon whether they fell within a big *Suba* or a mere district. The *Pargnas* were further split up into *Talluqas*, each of which contained from 50 to 100 *mauzas* or *villages* and they could be equated to the modern tehsils. Between the *Pargna* and the *mauza* or village which was the lowest unit, there were a few other units, such as *tappa* and *tope*.⁶⁰² The number of *tappas* in a *Pargna* varied according to its size.⁶⁰³ There are also references to the units called *Chaklas* and *Mahals*.

Whether *Subas* or districts, they were all governed by *Nazims* who naturally did not enjoy the same status and powers. The *Nazim* was appointed to look after the administration of the province. The *Nazim* enjoyed large powers and probably had a voice in the appointment of *Kardars* who worked under them.⁶⁰⁴ He was directly accountable to the ruler and held his office in accordance with the approval of his master.⁶⁰⁵ *Nazim* was the *Maharaja's* vice-regent or representative in the province.

Suba for that matter, was divided into *Pargans* and then into smaller units coming down to the *mauza* or village. Under Ranjit Singh a new situation arose as until 1818 his whole kingdom was little more than the erstwhile Mughal *Suba* of Lahore. Whereas then he was the supreme ruler of all of his territories, he felt the need of creating a new territorial unit which should be larger than the size of the *Pargna*. It is not definite what name was given to this new unit but on the basis of some references found in the contemporary accounts it may be said that the term used for it was *Ilaka*. This term was in use even before but mostly in the geographical sense. Under the Sikhs it acquired a new connotation and came to represent a new administrative division. For details see Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society under Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1982, p.81.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (Translated and ed.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, Amritsar, 1975, pp. 18, 51-52.

⁶⁰⁴ A.C. Banerjee, *The Khalsa Raj*, New Delhi, 1985, p.131.

⁶⁰⁵ Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 71.

Very responsible, intelligent and experienced persons of the highest calibre and suitability were appointed as *Nazims*. Sometimes the Princes were also posted as *Nazims* to gain administrative experience but they were always assisted by very efficient and seasoned advisers and administrators.

The *Nazim* was allowed to wield considerable powers in the territory under his jurisdiction. For every important decision regarding his province the *Nazim* had to secure the prior approval of the *Maharaja*. His main duty was to maintain peace and order in his territory and to deposit regular installments of revenue in the royal treasury.⁶⁰⁶ When a Governor was appointed, the *Maharaja* invested him with suitable honours; an instrument of instructions was also issued to him at the time of his departure to take charge.⁶⁰⁷ He was specially educated about the nature of his work, his responsibilities, powers, privileges and limitations. "The provincial Governor, remunerating himself with the surplus of the revenue which he had contracted to pay the sovereign, seldom at a lower rate than four annas in the rupee, or one-fourth of the estimated annual value of the cultivated land (about 2,50, 000/ sterling), was unscrupulous as to the means by which he wrung their substance from the landholders."⁶⁰⁸ The *Nazims* were sometimes allowed to administer their territories through a deputy or a *mukhtar-i-kar*.⁶⁰⁹ If and when the *Nazim* was found incapable or guilty of deliberate neglect or dereliction of duty he was removed from his office. It was a regular practice with the *Maharaja* to make enquiries about the administration

⁶⁰⁶ According to John Lawrence, the *Nazim* was required to punctually send the revenues collected from the territory under his charge : *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, 26 December, 1846, No. 1325-27. National Archives India, New Delhi (Here after read it NAI).

⁶⁰⁷ H.M. Lawrence, *Adventures of an Officer in the Punjab*, Vo. I, Patiala, 1970, (reprint), pp. 64-66.

⁶⁰⁸ Lieut. Col., Steinbach, *The Punjab; being a brief account of the Country of the Sikhs*, Patiala, 1970, p. 42.

⁶⁰⁹ See Kirpa Ram, *Gulabnama*, MS. M/ 1358, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, (English trans) Sukhdev Singh Charak, New Delhi, 1977, p. 314.

in Kashmir, Peshawar and Multan from foreigners who met him after passing through these areas. He is known to have made enquiries from Baron Hugel and Vigne about Kashmir in 1836 and from Court about Peshawar in 1836 and again in 1838.⁶¹⁰

The *Nazim* had a large number of *Kardars* as his subordinates. *Kardar* was an officer incharge of the *Pargna*.⁶¹¹ Like the *Nazims* they were also centrally appointed⁶¹². The *Nazims* and the *Kardars* could be used as checks upon each other. The *Kardar* was generally appointed by the ruler and normally had to submit a formal deed of acceptance before he was appointed. There was no fixed tenure of the *Kardar*. The position and importance of the *Kardars* depended on the extent of the territory under their charge. In the local Government, the *Kardar* was more important than the *Nazim* due to his executive role. He was endowed with extensive powers and performed multifarious and multi-dimensional duties. He was a revenue collector and supervisor of land settlement, a Treasurer as well as Accountant, a Judge and Magistrate, an Excise and Custom's officer and general supervisor of the people on the behalf of the Government. The *Kardar* was allowed a small establishment consisting of one *sandukchi* or treasurer on 15 to 20 rupees a month and a writer or *Mutasadi* on 20 to 25 rupees a month.⁶¹³

Unlike the *Kardar*, the *Qanungo* performed his functions in the *Talluqa* more or less permanently. He was the registrar of the department of land revenue. Under the Mughals there used to be one *Qanungo* for a *Pargna* but under the Sikhs there were sometimes two or three *Qanungos*

⁶¹⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, Part- II, Lahore, 1885, 1889 (English trans), V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1974, pp. 268-279

⁶¹¹ Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Delhi, 1952, p. 211. But according to G.L. Chopra, *Kardar* was incharge of a *Talluqa*. *The Punjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, Hoshiarpur, 1960, p. 84.

⁶¹² Dr. Indu Banga, *Presidential Address*, delivered at the XIV session of Punjab History Conference held at Punjabi University Patiala in 1980, p. 90.

⁶¹³ Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, October, 1977, Vol. II, p. 451.

in a *Pargna*. All information regarding the arable land, its possessions, produce, State share and the market prices of the grains and other crops was collected and preserved in his office. His office maintained a record of the local revenue rates and the revenue receipts also. During the Sikh period, he was, at places, paid a certain percentage of the produce or a monthly salary of 30 rupees.⁶¹⁴

During Ranjit Singh's time each *Pargna* or a *Talluqa* was divided into a number of *tappas*. In each *tappa* a *Chaudhari* was appointed for the collection of revenue. The *Muqadam* (the village headman) was entrusted with the general superintendence of the affairs of the village and among other things settled the disputes, attended to the Government officials visiting the village and collected the revenues from his village. Infact, more than one *Muqadam* (or *lambardar* or *panch*) could be found at places in a single village for each of its major subdivisions generally known as *tarafs* and *pattis*.⁶¹⁵ For their services rendered to the State the *Chaudhris* and *Muqadams* were generally given revenue-free lands. They also received a certain percentage of revenue collected. There is frequent reference in the records to the 5 per cent of commission paid to these functionaries. The *Patwari's*⁶¹⁶ main duty was to maintain revenue records for every village that fell in his jurisdiction. During Ranjit Singh's time, generally, three to eight villages comprised a *tappa* and a single *Patwari* maintained the records of the whole of the *tappa*. As a record keeper of the village, he was supposed to work in co-ordination with the village *muqadam* and the *Pargna qanungo*. The

⁶¹⁴. *Ibid.*, p. 452.

⁶¹⁵. Lewis W. Dane, *Final Report on the Revised Settlement of the Gurdaspur District*, Lahore, 1892, p.

57.

⁶¹⁶. According to Walter Lawrence, *The valley of Kashmir*, Srinagar, 1967, pp. 447-48, *The Patwari's* post normally hereditary.

remuneration of the *Patwari* was, generally, 1 per cent to 2 per cent of the collection made from the villages under his jurisdiction.

In Civil administration Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed Hindus as *Nazims* which were the following: Diwan Sawan Mal, Misr Rup Lal, Diwan Mohkam Chand, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Kirpa Ram, Diwan Chunni Lal and Sukh Dayal. Diwan Sawan Mal, *Nazim* of Multan and Misr Rup Lal *Nazim* of Jalandhar enjoyed long term of office and were also considered to be the best *Nazims*.

Jalandhar was an important district or *Ilaka* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The district of Jalandhar was named after the demigod *Jalandhara*.⁶¹⁷ Hoshiarpur was a district of Jalandhar. The Bist-Jalandhar *Doab* was the smallest *Doab*, and with its rich agricultural resources, it was fairly well cultivated throughout its length and breadth. In 1811 it fell in the hands of Ranjit Singh. Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh it was governed by several Governors: Diwan Mohkam Chand, Diwan Moti Ram, Avitabile, Nuruddin, Diwan Kirpa Ram, Shaikh Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din and Misr Rup Lal. Most of them were Hindus who administered Jalandhar efficiently.

Under Ranjit Singh the condition of Jalandhar *Doab* did not differ from that of the rest other monarch dominions of those time. The petty Sardars of the early Sikh times were gradually swallowed up and the country was placed under the care of officers, *Nazims*, appointed from Lahore. The first of these *Nazims* was Diwan Mohkam Chand.⁶¹⁸ His administration of the Jalandhar *Doab* was the most efficient and thus most popular.⁶¹⁹ As the Governor of the Jalandhar *Doab*, he was the

⁶¹⁷ *District and State Gazetteer of Undivided Punjab* Vol. III, p. 465.

⁶¹⁸ *District Gazetteer of Jalandhar and Kapurthala States 1904*, Lahore, 1908, p. 40; Kanihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881, (Pbi. Trans) Jeet Singh Seetal, Patiala, 1968, p. 179.

⁶¹⁹ W.E. Purser, *Final Report of Revised Settlement of the Jalandhar District in Punjab*, Lahore, 1892, p.41; S *District Gazetteer of Jalandhar*, 1883-84, p.56.

most regular in his payments to the royal exchequer at Lahore. He faithfully carried out instructions from his master which made him popular among the people.⁶²⁰ It is said that within a few months of his taking over the Governorship he remitted to his king a sum of rupees 50,000 and a large sum in goods.⁶²¹ His administration was the most human also. Under an order from Ranjit Singh, Diwan Mohkam Chand engaged an Italian engineer for converting Phillour imperial Saran/Sarai into a fort. The *Maharaja* ordered Diwan Mohkam Chand to built a fort on the bank of the Satlej for security purpose. Mohkam Chand suggested the *Maharaja* that there was a *Saran*, which was built by Sher Shah Suri, now under Dharam Singh, converted in to a fort. The *Maharaja* agreed with his suggestion. Mohkam Chand sent a force against Dharam Singh and seized the *Saran*.⁶²²

Under Diwan Mohkam Chand the collection of revenue was universally made in kind. Here and there money assessments were fixed, but only from year to year, and liable at any time to give way to the customary system of division of produce no matter, if harvest should fail, or, on the other hand turn out to be exceptionally good. Such money assessments, however, were more successful in Jalandhar than in Hoshiarpur. In the latter district the people could not be induced to continue cash payments for more than one or two harvests; and the ordinary system was to farm out the villages from year to year to bankers, who obtained the kind from the cultivators and paid in coin to the Government treasury.

⁶²⁰ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1933, pp. 173-75; B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, pp. 268-69.

⁶²¹ Gulcharan Singh, "Diwan Mohkam Chand", *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta, September, 1970, Vol. XVIII, p.41.

⁶²² Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 198; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, Patiala, 2003, (4th edition), p. 319.

The British Government was sensitive to the appointment of Diwan Mohkam Chand whose attitude was definitely anti British, as the Governor of Jalandhar *Doab*. Diwan Mokham Chand was evidently against the Britishers. He always advised the Maharaja against placing confidence in the foreigners. Griffin writes that General Ochterlony, the resident at Ludhiana, "did not find Mokham Chand a pleasant neighbour, for he hated the English who had made the Sutlej the boundary of his master's ambition."⁶²³ In 1812 when General Ochterlony came to attend the marriage ceremony of Prince Kharak Singh, he requested the *Maharaja* to show him the fort of Phillaur. The *Maharaja* agreed. When the shrewd Diwan learnt about this decision he strongly protested against the fort being shown to a *farangi* and a covert enemy of the Raj.⁶²⁴ The *Maharaja* realizing the sense in his General's arguments had to retrace his steps and disappoint General Ochterlony.⁶²⁵

After the capture of Kangra he was also appointed the *Nazim* of this place.⁶²⁶ As the Diwan was required for other expeditions, the full charge of Kangra hills was entrusted to Desa Singh Mijithia.

When Diwan Mohkam Chand was assigned some other duties the *Doab* was managed by his son Moti Ram.⁶²⁷ In October 29, 1814, Diwan Mohkam Chand died and was succeeded by Moti Ram.⁶²⁸ He held the appointment till he was appointed *Nazim* or Governor of Kashmir in 1819 and his place in Jalandhar was taken by his son Kirpa Ram.⁶²⁹ Soon after on the advice of Dhian Singh who was jealous of Moti Ram and his

⁶²³ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs : Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principle Families*, Lahore, 1865, p. 553.

⁶²⁴ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, Patiala, 1970, (reprint) p. 3.

⁶²⁵ Gulcharan Singh, *Ranjit Singh and His Generals*, Jalandhar, 1976, p. 41.

⁶²⁶ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 167.

⁶²⁷ W.E. Purser, *Final Report of Revised Settlement of the Jalandhar District in Punjab* p.41; *District Gazetteer of Jalandhar and Kapurthala States*, p.40.

⁶²⁸ *District Gazetteer of Jalandhar and Kapurthala States*, p. 40.

⁶²⁹ W.E. Purser, *Final Report of Revised Settlement of the Jalandhar District in Punjab*, p. 41.

sons, *Maharaja* asked Kirpa Ram to join the Peshawar expedition with his whole contingent. As Kirpa Ram brought with him only fifty horseman,⁶³⁰ he became the target of the *Maharaja's* anger. The reason behind this Diwan Kirpa Ram had not collected revenue properly from his *jagir* and he had not gave the salary to his soldiers. Due to this reason he had not prepared his army for expedition.⁶³¹ Kirpa Ram was imprisoned and fined him two lakh rupees.⁶³² His father Diwan Moti Ram was recalled from Kashmir and submitted Rs. 70,000 thousand as *Nazrana*.⁶³³ Ranjit Singh at once withdrew the charge of Jalandhar from Diwan Kirpa Ram and made it over at first to Fakir Aziz-ud-Din and then to Sardar Desa Singh Majithia. Murray gave different view. He mention "The bad management of the *jagirs* and the inefficient contingent kept up by this agent, were the assigned reasons. Moti Ram himself being left in his Government of Kashmir and subjected to no indignity or diminution of favour, consequent upon the sequestration."⁶³⁴ In a year and a half, Diwan Kirpa Ram was again taken into favour and was appointed to Kashmir where he remained till 1831, when he again was victimized by the perniciousness of Dhian Singh.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed Shaikh Gulam Muhi-ud-Din as the next *Nazim* of Jalandhar. The man was the first of a line of *Nazims* known as Shaikhs who were of evil repute on account of the merciless ways in which they exacted the last faithing from the people. After one year of Muhi-ud-Din's term the people raised such an outcry against his oppressive administration that he was recalled and Misr Rup Lal another

⁶³⁰ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 141.

⁶³¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, Lahore, 1961, (Punjabi Trans.) p. 578.

⁶³² Ibid., p. 554; According to W.L.Mc' Gregor. *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-I, pp. 195-96 He was fined 1,20,000 Rupees.

⁶³³ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 141; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, p. 554, says, the *Maharaja* demanded from Diwan Moti Ram Rs. 4,00,000 as fine.

⁶³⁴ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 62.

object of dislike to Raja Dhian Singh was sent in his place to Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur.⁶³⁵ Misr Rup Lal was appointed the *Nazim* of Jalandhar *Doab* in 1832.⁶³⁶

The new Governor was of a very different character from his predecessor. Misr Rup Lal's works in the Jalandhar Doab had also elicited much praise for his promotion of agriculture. He is described as, "an able and human ruler, true to his word and engagements, loved by the agriculturists and dreaded by evil-doors."⁶³⁷ His head-quarters were at the town of Hoshiarpur. A better man could not have been chosen. He was wealthy and for this reason free from any powerful inducement to oppress others and being connected, moreover, by marriage with a Jalandhar family, he had an interest in the prosperity of the country. He was more successful than his predecessors in introducing cash payments of revenue. He brought great prosperity to *Doaba Bist* Jalandhar.⁶³⁸ In Jalandhar *Doab* the practice of farming out a village or a group of villages was the common unit of assessment.⁶³⁹ The *Doab* "was well and equitably"⁶⁴⁰ governed by him and his assessments were "generally light"⁶⁴¹ According to John Lawrence, "He convert a perfect wilderness into the Garden of the Punjab".⁶⁴² Misr Rup Lal compounded in one sum the revenue and all extra dues and cesses leviable by the State; and his rates were such that holders of his leases, seldom

⁶³⁵ W.E. Purser, *Final Report of Revised Settlement of the Jalandhar District in Punjab*, p. 42.

⁶³⁶ Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Lahore, 1940. Vol. I, p. 362.

⁶³⁷ S.A. Abbot Deputy Commissioner, *Memorandum of the first eight years' British rule in the District Hoshiarpur* from its annexation in 1846-47 to the close of 1853-54, Selection from the Public Correspondence of the Punjab Administration, Vol-IV, No.3, Lahore, 1857, cited in *Punjab District Gazetteer*, Jalandhar District, Vol-XIV, 1904, p. 251.

⁶³⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, (English Trans.) V.S. Suri, Amritsar, 2002, p. 104.

⁶³⁹ *Foreign Department; Political Proceedings*, 31 December, 1847, No. 2443, Para 30, NAI; Dairy of P.S. Melvilli, Punjab Govt. Records (1847-1849), Vol-VI, Allahabad, pp. 205, 216; *District Gazetteer of Kangra*, p. 220.

⁶⁴⁰ R.R. Sethi, *John Lawrence as Commissioner of Jalandhar Doab* (1846-49), Punjab Govt. Record Office, Monograph No. 10, Lahore, 1930, p. 16,

⁶⁴¹ *District Gazetteer of Hoshiarpur*, 1883-84, p. 130.

⁶⁴² *Foreign Department; Political Proceedings*, 31 December, 1847, No. 2443, NAI.

hesitated, at a later period, to produce them before the British settlement officers -a sure sign that they would not object to pay his assessments. Even in the famine year of 1833 there were very few unpaid balances.⁶⁴³ On the other hand, he was known for his tyranny and high-handedness because the *Zamindars* were became wancterers and fugitives and escaped across the river Satlej.⁶⁴⁴

Misr Rup Lal was a popular and concientious administrator and did not approve oppression of any kind. The amount of the revenue collected by him from *Doab* of Jalandhar was about rupees 18, 72, 902⁶⁴⁵. His process of collecting revenue was methodical and honourable. He would never accept the smallest presents and kept a close watch upon the conduct of his subordinates. It is even said that "among the long rule of Sikh *Nazims*, who as a rule, considered the people under them as seated for their private profit, it is refreshing to meet with a man like Misr Rup Lal upright and just whose name is to this day remembered by the people with respect and affection."⁶⁴⁶ His name was almost universally revered and spoken of with gratitude. Sohan Lal Suri recorded at many places the words of praise used by Ranjit Singh, *Darbar* Courtiers and some British officials for the administration of Misr Rup Lal. For example in 1834 and 1838, Captain Wade appreciated the prosperity of the *Doaba* Bist Jalandhar by Misr Rup Lal.⁶⁴⁷ Fakir Aziz-ud-Din also praised Misr Rup Lal for his good administration.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴³ Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families note in the Punjab*, Vol.I, p. 362.

⁶⁴⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, ,*Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*,Daftar III, Part -II, p.247.

⁶⁴⁵ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 12.

⁶⁴⁶ S.A. Abbot, Deputy Commissioner, *Memorandum of the first eight years' British rule in the District Hoshiarpur* from its annexation in 1846-47 to the close of 1853-54, Selection from the Public Correspondence of the Punjab Administration, Vol.IV, No.3, p. 362, cited in *Punjab District Gazetteer*, Jalandhar District, Vol-XIV, 1904, p. 251.

⁶⁴⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, (Part-II)and (Part-IV), (English Translation), V.S.Suri, pp. 195, 448.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid*, (Part-V), p. 569.

Probably, Misr Rup Lal's praises would not have been sung so universally and spiritedly if he had not officiated between the two administrative tenures of two Shaikhs, one of whom had ground down the people before him and the other who had raised his demands largely, besides levying extra dues as he saw fit. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh *Misr* brothers experienced a turn in their fortunes mainly due to the enmity of *Dogra* brothers. A few months after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Misr Rup Lal was recalled and the old oppressor of the *Doab* Shaikh Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din was reappointed in his place. Misr Rup Lal ruled the *Doab* from 1832 to 1839.⁶⁴⁹

Multan was another important *Suba* which was conquered by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1818. When the *Maharaja* conquered it, the condition of this *Suba* was far from satisfactory. People of the city had been wantonly despoiled by the Sikh soldiery: the farmers had abandoned the fields and the population had deserted the town; the weavers and silk manufactures had ceased to perform their activities, and trade was at a standstill⁶⁵⁰. Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed Sukh Dayal the first Hindu *Nazim* or Governor of Multan.⁶⁵¹ He, as a *Nazim* of Multan received rupees 36,000 per annum,⁶⁵² but he could not collect revenue efficiently and the *Maharaja* removed the *Nazim* and imprisoned him on the charges of misappropriation of State dues. The country was then farmed out to Sham Singh for an annual sum of Rs. 6, 50, 000. He and his successor Bhaiya Badan Hazari could also not manage the

⁶⁴⁹ S.A. Abbot Deputy Commissioner, *Memorandum on the first eight years' British rule in the District Hoshiarpur* from its annexation in 1846-47 to the close of 1853-54, Selection from the Public Correspondence of the Punjab Administration, Vol-IV, No.3, Lahore, 1857, cited in *Punjab District Gazetteer*, Jalandhar District, Vol-XIV, 1904, p. 251.

⁶⁵⁰ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Hoshiarpur, 1977, p. 96.

⁶⁵¹ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.100; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 221; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 158; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 252; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol.II, p. 27; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol.II, p. 522.

⁶⁵² Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh," p. 451.

province. He failed to render an account and was dismissed soon after. Sawan Mal who had already attracted the attention of the *Maharaja* was promoted in his stead.

*Great may thy name be, Lala Sawan Mal
thou last repopulated a ruined country.*⁶⁵³

A new era began in 1819 when Diwan Sawan Mal was appointed as *Kardar* of half the province of Multan by Ranjit Singh.⁶⁵⁴ In 1829 he was promoted as the *Nazim* of the whole.⁶⁵⁵ By degrees other *ilakas* were added to the *Diwan's* contract until he held the greater part of the areas which fell under the Governorship of Multan. These were Jhang⁶⁵⁶ Muzaffargarh,⁶⁵⁷ Dera Ismail Khan⁶⁵⁸ (Montgomery) and Dera Ghazi Khan⁶⁵⁹. The title of *Diwan* was conferred on him in December 1832⁶⁶⁰. He also worked as the *Kardar* of *Pargna* Hafizabad and *Pargna* Ram Nagar.⁶⁶¹

Diwan Sawan Mal first of all turned his attention to establish peace and order. He had at his command a force of eight hundred Sikhs, under

⁶⁵³ Sita Ram Kohli, The Multan outbreak and the trial of Diwan Mulraj, *Punjab University Historical Journal*, I-II, 1932-33, p. 33.

⁶⁵⁴ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 116.

⁶⁵⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II (English Trans.) by V.S. Suri, pp. 461, 469, 496; *District Gazetteer of Multan*, 1883-84, p. 30.

⁶⁵⁶ In 1832 the district of Jhang gave to him. E.B. Steedman, *Report of the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab, 1874-80*, Lahore, 1882, p. 39; *Punjab District Gazetteer of Jhang District*, Lahore, 1929, p. 29; *District and State Gazetteer of Jhang District*, p. 29; *District Gazetteer of Jhang*, 1883-84, p. 20.

⁶⁵⁷ In 1837, the whole district of the present district of Muzaffargarh was united under Diwan Sawan Mal; *District Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh*, 1883-84, p. 40.

⁶⁵⁸ About 1830, Diwan Sawan Mal obtained charge of a considerable portion of the district except Dipalpur Tehsil; *District Gazeter of Montgomery District 1883-84*, p. 36; P.J. Fagan, *Gazetteer of Montgomery District 1898-99*, p. 43; C.A. Roe, Messers and W.E. Purser, *Report of the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of the Montgomery District*, Lahore, 1878, p. 38; *District and State Gazetteer of Montgomery District*, Vol. I, p. 42.

⁶⁵⁹ In 1832, Diwan Sawan Mal, took the District Dera Ghazi Khan, in farm; F.W.R. Fryer, *Final Report of the First Regular Settlement of Dera Ghazi Khan in Derajat Division, 1869-1874*, Lahore, 1876, p. 37; *District and State Gazetteer of Undivided Punjab*, Vol. I, pp. 26-27.

⁶⁶⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, Part-I-III, p. 206.

⁶⁶¹ J.H. Morris, *Report of the Revised Settlement of the Gujranwala District in the Lahore Division*, Lahore, 1860, p. 37; *District Gazetteer of Gujranwala*, 1883-84, p. 17.

Gandar Singh, besides the garrisons sprinkled over the country.⁶⁶² He appointed Daya Ram a native of Gujranwala, to the task of suppressing robberies and thefts. He immediately attacked the notorious freebooter Basehu Sangrial and killed him. The other thieves and robbers so severely punished the name Sawan Mal became a law by itself.

When Diwan Sawan Mal took the charge he kept power tightly concentrated in his own hands and subjected subordinate officials to minute supervision. He stopped the raids of the Kathias in the east of the district. His Naib Daya Ram, a native of Gujranwala suddenly attacked and killed Baku langrial a noted free-booter in the neighbourhood of Tulamba.⁶⁶³ After this, the *Zamindars* were made to pay revenue punctually and the *Diwan's* remittances to Lahore were always complete.⁶⁶⁴ The amount of revenue submitted by him was about Rs. 38, 98, 550.⁶⁶⁵

The country which thus came under his rule, comprising the districts of Multan, Leiah (Dera Ismail Khan), Dera Ghazi Khan, Khangarh (Muzaffargarh) and parts of Jhang was almost a desert.⁶⁶⁶ He faced a daunting task when he assumed office. Multan was largely desolate as a result of decades of misrule and warfare. Life and property were insecure and the population which once had been numerous and wealthy had become scanty and impoverished.

⁶⁶² Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Blochistan, Afghanistan, the Punjab and Kalat*, Vol. I, London, 1844, p. 398.

⁶⁶³ E.D. Maclagan, *Punjab District Gazetteer of Multan 1923-24*, p. 57.

⁶⁶⁴ Besides, one incident had taken place on April, 1835, Kanwar Naunihal Singh complaint to the *Maharaja* that Sawan Mal had not made any payment of salaries. On this the *Maharaja* said to the Kanwar, Fateh Singh Mann and Diwan Hakim Rai on 20 August 1835, "Diwan Sawan Mal was honest, humble man and always ready to serve. Therefore his reputation must be guarded and regards should be paid to his views in every matter and it would be advisable for them to make collections in easy installments according to his wish." Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III (Part-II) pp. 226, 245, 247.

⁶⁶⁵ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p.12. Patiala, 1970, (reprint) ; According to C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Patiala, 1970, p. 146. The amount of revenue submitted by Diwan Sawan Mal nearly forty Lakhs of Rupees.

⁶⁶⁶ *District Gazetteer of Multan*, 1883-84, p. 30.

Sawan Mal possessed considerable administrative experience. As a Governor he displayed a tremendous capacity for hard work and effected great improvements during a long reign. A productive but reasonable revenue system was introduced, extensive measures for agricultural, improvements were carried out and equal justice was meted out to all classes. He replaced the disorganised Government of the Pathans by a system of rule conducted on the principles which benefited both the State and the people. Due to these endeavours, cultivation, population and prosperity expanded substantially. Though he himself was a Hindu, yet he appreciated the virtues of the Pathans and these supplied his army with its most distinguished and dashing officers.

During these twenty three years Diwan Sawan Mal through his great executive abilities, raised the province of Multan to a higher State of prosperity than it had perhaps ever before attained and while giving satisfaction to his Government by regular remittances of revenue, he continued to accumulate an enormous private fortune for himself.⁶⁶⁷ In the district of Dera Ghazi Khan he appointed several *Kardars* for collect the revenue. They were : Jawahar Mal, Rang Ram, Kirpa Ram, Bahadur Chand, Radha Kishan, Linga Ram.⁶⁶⁸

Diwan Sawan Mal improved the lot of the cultivators by giving them relief from the pressure of exorbitant exactions. He introduced land reforms which without disturbing the propitiatory rights of the *Zamindars* encouraged the *Chakdars* and the *Sillundars* - the real cultivators of the soil, to reclaim and improve the land and dig wells in the uncultivated portion of the land.⁶⁶⁹ Sawan Mal's agricultural reforms in the *Suba* of Multan were based on the principle of lower taxes, better facilities for cultivators to get adequate price for their produce, and a regular supply of water to their fields. He organised a fresh revenue system and fixed the taxes on the land actually under cultivation

⁶⁶⁷ Herbert Edwards, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier in 1848-49*, Vol. II, London, 1851, p. 29.

⁶⁶⁸ *District and State Gazetteer of Undivided Punjab, District of Dera Ghazi Khan*, Vol. I, p. 27.

⁶⁶⁹ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* p. 97.

according to the nature of crops grown.⁶⁷⁰ It was simply an excise on agricultural produce, levied in the form of an average tax in money or a fixed proportion in kind, according the choice of the *Zamindar*. On the 1st class crops, as tobacco, sugar, poppy money rates were invariably charged and no option was allowed.⁶⁷¹

The prosperity brought about by such efforts of Diwan Sawan Mal attracted the notice of some high contemporary British officials and travellers who happened to pass a number of times through the Governorship of Diwan Sawan Mal and Maharaja Ranjit Singh also appreciated the administration of the *Diwan*.⁶⁷²

⁶⁷⁰ E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab*, 1874-1880, p. 113.

⁶⁷¹ E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab*, 1874-1880, p. 113

⁶⁷² On 15 August, 1836 the *Maharaja* observed that "Sawan Mal could wield pen and sword equally well." Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, Part-II, p. 426; On 16 April, 1838, Maharaja Ranjit Singh observed that "Diwan Sawan Mal was an honest man and one who made his country ever more prosperous"; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, Part-V, p. 608; On 2 January 1839, the *Maharaja* again praised Diwan Sawan Mal's faithfulness and capability; On 16 September 1835, Captain Wade, who had travelled right across the whole province of Multan remarked that Sawan Mal was an honest and faithful man, who took great interest in making the country prosperous and the people were very grateful to him. He said that "there was no other man with the *Maharaja*, the *Diwan* and would never be". Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, (Part-II), p. 247; On 11 January 1836, Mackeson told the *Maharaja* that Sawan Mal "was incomparable in the control and administration of his own". *Ibid*, pp. 246-247; James Douie describes Sawan Mal as an oriental ruler of the best type who did much to restore the prosperity after the century of anarchy; James Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, p. 20; According to Munshi Hukam Chand Diwan Sawan Mal was a wise administrator and the people of Multan mentioned his name with great respect. He was regular in attending to the affairs of his office and used to sit there daily for several hours. Besides administering justices personally, he paid very careful attention to revenue papers; Munshi Hukam Chand, *Tarikh-i-Multan*, Lahore, 1884, p. 470-71 cited in Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, p. 74; Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Blochistan, Afghanistan, the Punjab and Kalat*, Vol. I, p.398, observes that Diwan Sawan Mal was a popular ruler, and many anecdotes relate accounts of his liberality and indulgence even on matters connected with religion. He further observes about his administration that "the Sikh authority over the conquered provinces held by the *subedar* being firmly established, the administration is mild, owing partly, perhaps, to his personal character and two Sikhs are located at every village and hamlet on the part of the Government. The peasantry make over a third of the produce of their lands: neither do they complain"; Vigne writes in *A Personal Narrative of a Visit of Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan*, Vol. II. London 1840, p. 23; about his personal appearance and Government that he was a thin man, with a good tempered character and for a native a superior expression of his countenance and was said to have distinguished himself at the taking of the city. His Government was well spoken of by the Lohani merchants who gave him an excellent character for justice in his dealings with them. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had also been heard to have said that he was one of the best officers in his service; According to G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, p. 87, Diwan Sawan Mal was Stated in every account to have been efficient and progressive. He succeeded in introducing agricultural reforms of a far reaching character, and thereby changing the whole appearance of the country; E.D. MacLagan describes that Diwan Sawan Mal was one of the very few men in India, who had been able to combine the exaction of a very full revenue with the complete contentment of

The system of land revenue assessment prevalent under the Sikhs in the *Suba* of Multan functioned on the basis of Governmental share either in cash or kind of the gross produce. Four methods of collection of revenue were employed 1. *Jinsi or Batai* 2. *Naqdi- Jinsi* 3. *Zabti* or cash assessment 4. *Qorari* or cash lumpsum assessment.⁶⁷³

Diwan Sawan Mal handled the revenue affairs of Multan with commendable ability. O'Brien in his account said about the Sikh rule in Multan, "Diwan Sawan Mal's Government was better than anything that had proceeded it. Its sole object was the accumulation of wealth for the *Diwan*. The execution of public works, the administration of justice and security of life and prosperity were of secondary consideration and were insisted on only because without them agriculture would not prosper and the revenue would not be paid".⁶⁷⁴ The revenue deposited by him in the central exchequer was nearly twenty-two lakhs which had been collected by him from the three districts of Multan, Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan and from parts of Montgomery, Jhang and Dera Ismail Khan. Diwan's system was well suited to the agricultural conditions of the country under his rule and it is interesting to note the experience of his system has led us in many cases to methods of assessment very similar to those which he adopted.

The revenue collected by the *Kardars* from the *Talluqa* and *Munshi* helped him largely. Several instructions were issued to the *Kardars* of Multan by Diwan Sawan Mal for proper collection of revenue. They were expected to send the revenues punctually in six installments. Three each for the *Kharif* and the *Rabi*.

the people from whom it was exacted; E.D. MacLagan, *Punjab District Gazetteer of Multan 1923-24*, Lahore, 1927, p. 57.

⁶⁷³ For more details about revenue assessment methods see chapter III.

⁶⁷⁴ Edward O. Brien, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab*. 1873-80, p.51.

<i>Kharif</i> -	First Installment	-	15 <i>Maghar</i>
	Second Installment	-	15 <i>Poh</i>
	Third Installment	-	15 <i>Magh</i>
<i>Rabi</i> -	First Installment	-	15 <i>Jeth</i>
	Second Installment	-	15 <i>Har</i>
	Third Installment	-	15 <i>Sawan</i>

The policy of extensive cultivation attained its highest watermark of success in the *Suba* of Multan under the management of Diwan Sawan Mal. The *Diwan* succeeded in bringing vast tracts of waste land under cultivation. There were plenty of such waste lands there. The owners were not only small in number but also did not possess the means to cultivate all their lands. Their difficulties were increased manifold by the scarcity and uncertainty of rainfall.

Diwan Sawan Mal promoted the colonization of waste lands by offering favourable terms of assessment to individuals who brought new lands under cultivation. A large number of colonials were settled in Jhang and Muzaffargarh by Diwan Sawan Mal and he gave them land and protection.⁶⁷⁵ He seems to have made special efforts to colonise the Leiah Thal, and granted very favourable terms to those who built wells there.⁶⁷⁶ The *Diwan* decided to support them and assured them that if they developed any lands they would not be ousted from them rather they would be recognized as virtual owners of those lands (*adna malik*) while the real owners (*ala malik*) would only be nominal owners.

Diwan Sawan Mal introduced many reforms. He induced the people to combine to dig new and restore old canals. He excavated canals (in the

⁶⁷⁵ A Large Number of Labana Colonists from the Punjab settled there. *District Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh 1883-84*, p. 41; *District Gazetteer of Jhang 1883-84*, p. 77; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 381; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. III, p. 90;

⁶⁷⁶ *Punjab District Gazetteer of Muzaffargarh District, Leiah Tehsil*, 1916, p. 60.

Multan district alone of the length of 300 miles), he favoured commerce and acted in every way as a wise and beneficent ruler.⁶⁷⁷ Multan was studded with a system of old and new canals as under:

1. The *Diwanwah*, a canal 35 miles in length, irrigating Ladhran, Khai and Mailsi, was an old disused canal re-excavated by Mustafa Khan under Sawan Mal. It was navigable for boats up to 40 miles from Multan.
2. The *Sardarwah*, 38 miles in length, irrigating Kehrur and Sardarwah. It was navigable for about 25 miles along the highway from Multan to Bahawalpur.
3. The *Muhammadwah*, a canal having a length of 30 miles, irrigating Kehrur. It was navigable for 12 miles from its mouth at Shahpur Jussa.
4. The *Bahawalwah*, length 30 miles, irrigated Mailsi and Kehrur. It was navigable for about 15 miles from its mouth.
5. The *Sultanwah*, length 25 miles. It was a branch of the *Bahawalwah*, which irrigated Mailsi and Kehrur and was navigable for about 3 miles.
6. The *Qabulwah*, length 20 miles. It irrigated Mailsi and was navigable for 3 miles.
7. The *Jamwah*, length 30 miles. It irrigated Mailsi and was navigable for 8 miles from its mouth at Niamat Ali.
8. The *Jamwah* and the *Qutubwah*, length 30 miles. It irrigated Mailsi, and was navigable for about 10 miles.
9. Canal *Wali Muhammad*, length 30 miles. It irrigated Multan and its environments, and was navigable beyond Suraj Kund.
10. The *Shahpur* canal, length 12 miles. It irrigated Multan.
11. The *Doorana* canal, length 10 miles. It irrigated Multan and Sitlamarhi.
12. The *Sikandarwah*, length 30 miles. It irrigated Multan and its suburbs and was navigable for 15 miles.
13. The *Gujhala* canal length 12 miles. It irrigated Shujabad and was partly navigable.
14. The *Bakhtwah*, length 12 miles. It irrigated Shujabad and was navigable for about 8 miles.
15. The *Dhundhu* canal, length 16 miles. It irrigated Shujabad and was navigable for about 8 miles.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁷ Lepel Griffin. *The Punjab Chiefs*, p. 274.

⁶⁷⁸ H. James, *Canals of the Multan district*. No.1 dated 29 November 1849- selections from Public correspondence of the administration for the affairs of the Punjab. Vol-I, Lahore 1851. cited in B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, p. 98

The system of farming out the revenue to the highest bidder was successful under Sawan Mal in Multan.⁶⁷⁹ Each village was assessed in the way that gave the largest return to Government, but whenever possible the interests of the cultivators were also safe guarded. If a man had no capital to build a well or to buy oxen, the State promptly supplied the capital and recouped as best as it could, not according to any rigid system but by taking as much from the owner each year as he could spare without injury to the cultivation. The Hindus who wanted to invest money in land were given uncultivated land to reclaim and when it had been reclaimed the cultivators were made to pay full annual revenue for it. Useless expenditure on *jagirs* and *Mu'afis* was reduced to the minimum and everything able to yield revenue was productively utilized.

Diwan Sawan Mal held regular *Darbars* and dispensed justice to all without any discrimination of cast and creed. He used to receive written petitions, which he either disposed of himself or handed them over to his *Kardars* for disposal.⁶⁸⁰ He administered justice firmly and impartially and channellized all his energies to the improvement of his charge and its restitution from the decay into which it had fallen owing to the wars and tumults of late years. Diwan Sawan Mal's justice was renowned for its even handedness. A peasant once charged that his crop had been ruined by a nobleman's horses that had been allowed to run loose. When one of the Diwan's son Ram Das proved to be the guilty party, Sawan Mal imprisoned him for several days. According to Herbert Edwards "Between the poor he did justice with great pains and impartiality; but a rich man, even if in the right never got a verdict from Sawan Mal without paying for

⁶⁷⁹ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, p. 108

⁶⁸⁰ F.W.R. Eryer, *Final Report of the First Regular Settlement of Dera Ghazi Khan in the Derajat Division 1869-1874*, p. 70. Diwan Sawan Mal heard as many petitions as might be presented ; *Lahore Political Daries* 1847-49, Vol. V, Allahabad, p. 142.

it."⁶⁸¹ Cattle thieves were invariably executed. When on one occasion a local dignitary pleaded for the life of a robber, the *Diwan* caused the thief to be strung up in front of the man's door.⁶⁸²

In order to avoid sex offences, Diwan Sawan Mal issued strict orders in 1836 that under no circumstances the parents should keep their grown up daughters unmarried.⁶⁸³ In case of disobedience they were severely punished. State officers were instructed to arrange marriages of grown up girls and not to leave the matter in the hands of their parents.

The *Diwan* evidently possessed the gift of inspiring respect and admiration. Several years after his demise a Multani notable informed Herbert Edwards, "he served Sawan Mal for three years, and sat before him in *Darbar* where he transacted business everyday during that period, yet never heard one foolish word come out of his mouth". Possibly in response to a probing question from Edwards, the dignitary was able to recall one bad habit of Sawan Mal's. When a soldier offended him, he was prone to shout for the man to be stripped of sword and shield and be thrown out of the service.⁶⁸⁴ He was a man who knew when to be strict and when to be lenient.⁶⁸⁵

Diwan Sawan Mal's military activities were also considerable. He took steps against the tribes to subdue them. Sawan Mal built forts at Dajal, Harrand, Amarkot and strongly garrisoned them. In the district of Dera Ghazi Khan, one of the *Diwan's* first acts was to proceed against the Mazari tribe, who being cut off from the rest of the district by the Harrand-Dajal county, did not come under the influence of the Sikhs till

⁶⁸¹ Herbert Edwards, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier in 1848-49*, Vol. II, p. 31.

⁶⁸² *District Gazetteer of Multan*, 1901-02, p. 277.

⁶⁸³ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.V, New Delhi, 1991, p. 114.

⁶⁸⁴ Herbert Edwards, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier in 1848-49*, Vol. II, pp. 25-27.

⁶⁸⁵ *Calcutta Review*, Vol-I, May-December, 1844, London, 1881, p. 444.

the annexation of that county in 1827. They, then refused to acknowledge their supremacy and continued the predatory habits for which they were notorious. Diwan Sawan Mal marched against them with an army of 7,000 men, drove them into the Hills and made them surrender all the stolen cattles in their possession.⁶⁸⁶ They soon retaliated and sacked the town of Mithankot. The second expedition proved more effective as a result of which Bahram Khan, the Mazari Chief, attended the *Diwan's Darbar* at Multan in 1833-34. After this the Gurchani tribe rose in rebellion and attacked rose the great fort at Harrand which was built by the Sikhs and murdered the warden of the fort. Now this rebellion had also to be put down.⁶⁸⁷

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Diwan Sawan Mal's power increased day by day but he never turned into a rebel. He paid his tribute with regularity even in adverse circumstances; there was no cause of complaint. The Mazari, who were notorious robbers maintained a semi-independence and continued to plunder their neighbours until 1833 when their chief attended Diwan Sawan Mal's *Darbar* at Multan.⁶⁸⁸ Dogra brothers were inimical towards him. Diwan Sawan Mal was the arch opponent of the minister Raja Dhian Singh and his brothers Gulab Singh and Suchet Singh whose influence at the court of Ranjit Singh was all powerful.⁶⁸⁹

In April, 1834, a vexatious altercation broke out between the *Zamindars* of Qadirabad in the territory of Diwan Sawan Mal and the villagers of the suburbs of Pindi Bhatian in the *Talluqa* of Raja Gulab Singh. In this quarrel the *Zamindars* of the latter territory were wounded and many others were killed. *The Maharaja* ordered Diwan Sawan Mal to

⁶⁸⁶ *District Gazetteer of Dera Ghazi Khan 1883-84*, p. 27.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁸ A.H. Diack, *Final Report of the Revision of Settlement of Dera Ghazi Khan District (1893-97)*, p. 7.

⁶⁸⁹ G.T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit of Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan*, Vol. II, p. 23.

hand over the village to Raja Gulab Singh and deduct its income from the account of the *Maharaja*.⁶⁹⁰

In the month of June, another disturbance occurred between the *Kardars* of Raja Gulab Singh and Diwan Sawan Mal. The *Maharaja* reprimanded the *Diwan* and sent Devi Dayal to settle the dispute. The *Diwan* was warned that, "if he wanted to spend his days in joy and health, he was to withdraw his hand from mischief."⁶⁹¹ Even then the dispute did not end. In 1835 the flames of enmity and disturbance were rekindled. The *Maharaja* then appointed some of his important courtiers such as Jamadar Khushal Singh, Bhai Ram Singh, Bhai Gobind Ram, Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, Jawand Singh Mokhal and Misr Beli Ram to intervene and bring about reconciliation between the two parties. Through their efforts it was settled, "that the *Kardars* of both the groups would remain firmly established upon their own boundaries, that property and cattle of both sides would be mutually restored and that they were to strengthen their undertaking that none of them would create mischief of disturbance, adding further that in case of breach they would be considered offenders against the *Maharaja*."⁶⁹² Still the quarrel persisted in one form or another.

In April 1837, the *Maharaja* ordered Raja Gulab Singh to establish his rule in the four *Talluqas* of Lalalpur, Chaniot, Pindi Bhatian and Jhang Sial hitherto included in the territory of Diwan Sawan Mal. Misr Sukhraj was appointed to realize the money from the country.⁶⁹³ Additional revenue for the four *Talluqas* of the country of Diwan Sawan Mal were fixed at 1,25,000 rupees and his grandson Rama Chand

⁶⁹⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, (Part-III), (Punjabi Trans.) Amarwant Singh, Amritsar, 2001, p. 245.

⁶⁹¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, (Part-III), (Punjabi Trans.), p. 248.

⁶⁹² Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, (Part-III), (Punjabi Trans.), pp. 242-43

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*, Daftar III, Part IV and V, (Eng. Trans.) Amarwant Singh, Amritsar, 2002, p. 15.

accepted this arrangement in writing. Henceforth, a letter was also sent to Raja Gulab Singh not to interfere with the territory of the *Diwan*.⁶⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Raja Gulab Singh with his troops reached near Rampur and asked the *Diwan's* soldiers to hand over the fort to him. A fight started and several soldiers were killed and wounded on both sides.⁶⁹⁵ The warning, this, did not produce the desired effect and shortly afterwards a complaint was received from Devi Dayal, stating that on account of the continuing quarrel between Diwan Sawan Mal and Raja Gulab Singh a great deal of good land was running to waste. Immediately an order was issued to Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh to settle their boundaries and to bring about reconciliation between them.⁶⁹⁶

In October 1837, Dhian Singh complained to the *Maharaja* that "the flame of disagreement between the *Kardars* and *Zamindars* of Sahiwal in the territory of Diwan Sawan Mal and Raja Dhian Singh had grown aloft".⁶⁹⁷ The *Maharaja* ordered Raja Tej Singh to suppress the dissensions completely. Notably, only a year earlier, in 1836, the *Maharaja* had strongly defended Diwan Sawan Mal when Raja Dhian Singh and Jamadar Khushal Singh both had indulged in open criticism of the *Diwan* before the *Maharaja*.⁶⁹⁸

Diwan Sawan Mal died on September 29, 1844.⁶⁹⁹ Thus perished the wisest and best of all Sikh Governors. He continued in office till his last breath. He never misruled his power. Ranjit Singh was always pleased with Sawan Mal's service to the people.⁷⁰⁰ The period of Diwan Sawan Mal was regarded by the people with esteem and affection. Every

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁶⁹⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III, (Part-IV-V), p. 62.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Daftar-III (Part-III), (English Trans), V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1974, p. 387.

⁶⁹⁹ For more details about Diwan Sawan Mal's death see Chapter VI.

⁷⁰⁰ Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 381.

segment of the population benefited from his administration whether its *Hindu* or *Muslim* peasants or Pathans. The Multan *Suba* was known throughout the kingdom as Dar-ul-Aman (the abode of peace). The peace and tranquility he established in the territory of Multan surpassed that of Hindustan which is governed by a body of law.⁷⁰¹ On the whole "He was strict, but not according to native notions, cruel; he took from the cultivators and traders all he could take without killing the nest egg; but he allowed no ravaging by murree or mazari plunders or by more lawless Sikh soldiers. He kept both his own people and his wild neighbours in hand by combined energy and moderation."⁷⁰²

Diwan Sawan Mal left behind an enormous sum of ninety lakhs of rupees amassed by the old *Diwan* during twenty three years of unblemished career. His Government was apportioned by his sons. He left six sons.⁷⁰³ During the *Diwan's* life time his eldest son Mulraj ruled Shujabad and Jhang while Karam Narain was made incharge of Leiah (Dera Ismail Khan). It was a common and amusing saying amongst the people that while Multan had been blessed with monsoon showers *Sawan* (the summer rain) and Leiah with *Karam* (kindness), Jhang got only *Mula* (an insect which eats the root of the corn). Diwan Sawan Mal could wield the pen and sword equally well and it was a matter of great credit to him. Diwan Sawan Mal was succeeded by his son Mulraj as *Nazim* or Governor of Multan.⁷⁰⁴

Mulraj was later confirmed in the *Nizamat* of Multan by the British also. The British raised his annual tribute from Rs. 25,000 to 30,000. He expressed his inability to pay this amount and he resigned from the post in December, 1847. Sardar Kahan Singh was appointed in his place as

⁷⁰¹ Mohan Lal, *Travels in Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan*, New Delhi, (reprint), 1986.p.401.

⁷⁰² *Calcutta Review*, Vol.I, May-December, 1844, London, 1881, p. 444.

⁷⁰³ Ram Das, Diwan Mulraj, Karam Narayan, Sham Singh, Ram Singh and Narayan Singh.

⁷⁰⁴ *Foreign Department ; Secret Consultation*, 10 October, 1844, No. 90, NAI.

Governor and he was sent to Multan along with two British official's viz., Agnew and Anderson to take charge. But when the party reached Multan, Agnew and Anderson were killed and Kahan Singh made prisoner by the Sikh soldiers of Multan. They then forced Mulraj to revolt against the British.⁷⁰⁵

Another important *Pargna* or province was Kashmir which had been conquered by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1819. The Sikh rule lasted from 1819 to 1846 when the valley of Kashmir was handed over by the British to Raja Gulab Singh Dogra of Jammu. The conquest of Kashmir had been a significant addition to the Sikh Kingdom as Kashmir was the richest province of the Sikh Kingdom next only to Multan.⁷⁰⁶ The conquest of Kashmir added an annual revenue of 40,000,00 rupees to the Kingdom of Lahore and brought under Sikh rule an extensive area inhabited by varied races like Aryans and Turanians in the valley and its loftier recesses.

Kashmir proved a far tougher problem and a number of *Nazims* or Governors were appointed in quick succession because the *Maharaja* was not happy with them. Under Sikh supremacy Kashmir was ruled by ten Governors; Misr Diwan Chand 1819 Diwan Moti Ram, 1819-20, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa 1820-23, Diwan Moti Ram 1823-24 (second term), Diwan Chunni Lal 1824-25, Diwan Kirpa Ram 1826-1830, Bhima Singh Ardali 1831-1833. Kanwar Sher Singh 1833-1834, Colonel Mian Singh 1834-1841, Shaikh Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din 1841-46, Shaikh Imam-ud-Din 1846-1846. It is interesting that out of these, five were *Hindus*, three *Sikhs* and two *Muslims*. Diwan Moti Ram, Hari Singh Nalwa, Diwan Kirpa Ram, Kanwar Sher Singh ruled for short periods only. During his

⁷⁰⁵ Sita Ram Kohli, (ed.) by Khushwant Singh, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, New Delhi, 1967, pp. 141-144.

⁷⁰⁶ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 22.

kingship Ranjit Singh never visited Kashmir. In 1831 the *Maharaja* in his conversation with Captain Wade referred to the names of his Chiefs who had brought ruin to Kashmir.⁷⁰⁷ Diwan Moti Ram and Kirpa Ram were once even severely penalized.⁷⁰⁸ Most of these *Nazims*, whose average tenure of office was about two years, were either recalled for mal-administration or were constantly grilled for non-fulfilment of their engagements.

Sikh rule in Kashmir lasted for 27 years. Misr Diwan Chand in 1819 was appointed the first *Nazim* or Governor of Kashmir.⁷⁰⁹ Diwan Devi Das was appointed assessment and revenue farmer.⁷¹⁰ Belonging to the *Hindu* trading class, Misr Diwan Chand was the conqueror of Multan in 1818 and the leader of the successful expedition to Kashmir in 1819. Excepting for his mopping up operations in the hilly tracts of the valley, there is nothing worthy of note in Misr Diwan Chand's brief Governorship. Soon he was replaced by Diwan Moti Ram⁷¹¹ son of Diwan Mohkam Chand a well known minister of the *Maharaja*, who governed Kashmir for a year and two months in 1819-1820. Diwan Moti Ram established military posts at important places and continued mopping up operations until all the Afghan pocket had been cleared. In order to devote himself exclusively to the restoration of law and order and to administer equal-handed justice to all. He was assisted by Pandit Birbal Dhar, the collector of revenues during his short tenure of fourteen months.⁷¹² Diwan Moti Ram farmed out Kashmir to Birbal Dhar for 52

⁷⁰⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III (Part-II), (English Trans) V.S. Suri, p.178.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid*, part-I p. 10; Diwan Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, pp. 131, 165.

⁷⁰⁹ Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 291; P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1973, (IIInd edition), p. 610.

⁷¹⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1964, p. 418.

⁷¹¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p.519; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 291.

⁷¹² Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 262.

lakhs annually.⁷¹³ The contract for the manufacture of shawls was given to Jawahar Mal for Rs.10 lakhs yearly.⁷¹⁴ Diwan Moti Ram was kind hearted and liked by the people. "By his just and human conduct he restored confidence in the valley".⁷¹⁵

During the first term of Diwan Moti Ram, Cholera broke out and assumed epidemic proportions and took a heavy toll on life. Diwan Moti Ram had also to contend with the chronic poverty of the country, aggravated by unfortunate visitations of nature in the form of famine and pestilence.⁷¹⁶ He might have succeeded in improving the condition of the country, had he been granted full liberty of action. But there was the hostile faction of the Dogras at Lahore, who always thwarted his schemes through their influence with the *Maharaja*. Diwan Moti Ram was a wise and cautious administrator and with the help of Pandit Birbal Dhar he realized revenue amounting to 53,00,000 rupees by encouraging shawl trade which alone fetched 10,00,000 rupees annually.⁷¹⁷

Moti Ram who possessed considerable talent was keen to do something positive to improve the condition of the poor Kashmiris. Cow-slaughtering, prevalent for centuries, was declared a crime punishable by death and *Muslims* were actually hanged and dragged through the city of Srinagar and even brunt alive for having slain cattle.⁷¹⁸

In 1819, Diwan Moti Ram struck in the Srinagar mint *Nanakshahi* rupee. Kashmir was previously divided into 22 *pargnas*. Diwan Moti Ram reduced their number to 20. The Afghan soldiers used to seize the pretty girls for their ever expanding *harems*. This cruel practice came to an end

⁷¹³ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 114.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 114; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 348.

⁷¹⁵ Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 199.

⁷¹⁶ G.L. Chopra, *The Punjab as a Sovereign State (1799-1839)*, p. 104

⁷¹⁷ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 419.

⁷¹⁸ B.N. K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir.*, p. 611; G.M.D. Sufi, *A History of Kashmir*, Vol-II, New Delhi, 1974, p. 726.

under the *Sikhs*. Further the terror of the Sikh name brought thefts and robbery almost to a complete stop.

Accustomed to facing stiff opposition from *Muslims* in the Punjab and Frontier district, *Sikhs* looked at the Kashmiris in the same light and promulgated orders with a view to checking the emergence of a Muslim opposition in the valley. Consequently, in the tenure of Diwan Moti Ram, the Jama Masjid of Srinagar was closed to Public prayers.⁷¹⁹ Many other Mosques were converted into *Nazul* property. *Jagir* grants attached to mosques and shrines were generally revoked. The *Azan* or the Muslim call for prayer was also prohibited. Although the motive may have been political rather than religious, the closure of the mosque upset the local Muslim Kashmiris. It was rumoured that Moti Ram was also planning to destroy another mosque, the *Khanqah-i-Mulla*, but Pandit Birbal Dhar dissuaded him. The stone mosque (Pathar Masjid) at Srinagar built by Empress Noor Jahan was converted in to a ware house. In other religious matters *Muslims* were given full freedom.

Diwan Moti Ram's mild but sympathetic administration could bring about any major administrative reforms.⁷²⁰ He, however, remained in office for only fourteen months and wishing to retire to Banaras, resigned the appointment on the death of his eldest son, Ram Dayal, who was killed in Hazara in 1820. The *Maharaja* sent as his successor, the fighting general, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa. But his ideas of governance were so primitive that there was widespread distress in the land. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, could not, due to his misgovernance of the province, remain incharge of the administration for long. Maharaja Ranjit Singh

⁷¹⁹ William Moorcraft and Mr. George Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab in Ladakh and Kashmir : In Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bakhara 1819-1825*, Vol. III, New Delhi, (reprint), 1986, p. 341.

⁷²⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III (Part-I), p. 140.

recalled him and Moti Ram, a man of pacific and devotional habits was re-appointed *Nazim* of Kashmir.⁷²¹

Diwan Moti Ram, during his second Governorship continued the agricultural reforms of his predecessor.⁷²² He tried to ameliorate the miserable condition of the people. When Moti Ram returned as *Nazim*, Birbal Dhar was still working as a revenue collector. It was soon discovered that Pandit Birbal Dhar indulged in intrigues and large scale corruption. He ordered a throughout audit of the accounts which had been submitted by Pandit Birbal Dhar. This revealed that large sums recovered as revenues had neither been deposited in the treasury nor accounted for. Pandit Birbal Dhar was imprisoned for misappropriation of State revenues. All of his property was confiscated and he was put in prison, where he died. Diwan Moti Ram was dismissed from the post of the *Nazim* of Kashmir in 1824 and Chunni Lal was appointed in his place.⁷²³

Moorcraft visited Kashmir during the *Nizamat* of Diwan Moti Ram. He criticized the administration of the *Sikhs* and exposed the condition of the Kashmiri people and wrote a detail account about Kashmir.⁷²⁴

⁷²¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p. 536.

⁷²² R.K. Parmu. *History of the Sikh Rule in Kashmir*, p. 136. cited in Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora (ed.) *Politics, Society and Economy*, Patiala, 1984, p. 165.

⁷²³ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p.141; Kanhiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 293; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, (Punjabi Translation) p. 556-57; Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 360 and Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashat-i-Punjab*, MS. M/790, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, (Pbi. Trans.), p. 160, both says the *Maharaja* fined Diwan Moti Ram Rs. 70,000.

⁷²⁴ Moorcraft mention, "everywhere the people were in the most abject condition, exorbitantly taxed by the Sikh Government, and subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression by its officers... not one-sixteenth of the cultivable surface is in cultivation, and the inhabitants, starving at home, are driven in great numbers to the plains of Hindustan" William Moorcraft and Mr. George Trebeck, in *the Himalayan provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab in Ladakh and Kashmir : In Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara 1819-1825*, Vol. III, p. 343; Every shawl was stamped and the stamp duty was 26 percent, upon the estimated value. Besides this a considerable sum is raised by duties upon the import of wool, and a charge upon every shop or workman connected with the manufacture; Likewise, every trade was taxed, "Butchers, bakers, boatmen, vendors of fuel, public notaries, scavengers, prostitutes, all paid a sort of corporation tax. A portion of the *singhara* (water-nut) crop, to the extent annually of a lakh of rupees was claimed by the Government. Even the chief officer of justice paid a large gratuity of 30,000 rupees a year

At the time of Moorcraft's visit the sum paid by the farmer was 36 lakhs of Punjab rupees, equal to twenty nine lakhs of Sicca rupees or about two hundred and ninety thousand pounds; but a much larger sum was extorted from the people, although it was only to be realized by the greatest rigour and oppression.⁷²⁵ Since the days of the *Sikhs* the pressure has been a little relaxed and wanton acts of oppression are rare, but life must still be hardly worth living when cultivators are selling whole villages with such rights as they have for no other equivalent than the protection of a powerful *Pandit*.

Moorcraft wrote about the prevailing methods of land tenures during the Sikh period.⁷²⁶

for his appointment, being left to re-imburse himself as he may, *Ibid*, p. 345; Crime of any form was altogether absent among the Kashmiris themselves. But the Sikh soldiers committed untold persecutions on the poor natives of Kashmir. Moorcroft writes, "The murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine to the Government of from sixteen to twenty rupees of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu and two rupees if he was a Muhammadan" *Ibid.*, p. 442; Villages where Moorcraft stopped in the Lolab direction were half deserted, and the few inhabitants that remained were the semblance of extreme wretchedness... "The poor people were likely to reap little advantage from their labours for a troop of tax-gatherers were in the village, who had sequestered nine-tenths of the grain of the former for the revenue. Islamabad was as filthy a place as can well be imagined, and swarming with beggars. Shupaiyon was not half-inhabited, and the inhabitants of the country went round half-naked and miserably emaciated, presented a ghastly picture of poverty and starvation", *Ibid.*, pp. 293-94; "The people of Sugam were almost in a savage State. The men were in general tall and robust; the women haggard and ill-looking. The houses were mostly constructed of small trees coarsely dovetailed together and coated' with rough plaster inside. A flat planking was laid over the top, resting on the walls, and above that a sloping roof was constructed, open at the ends, the space being either filled with dry grass, or serving to give shelter of poultry. The interior was divided by partitions of wickerwork, plastered into three four dirty small apartments", *Ibid*.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

⁷²⁶ Moorcraft mention, "The *Khalsah* lands are now, as heretofore, let out for cultivation. Those near the city are termed *sar-kishti*, those more remote *pai-Kishti*, or head and foot, upper and lower cultivation. When the grain has been trodden out, a division takes place between the farmer and the Government. This was formerly an equal division, but the Government has advanced in its demands until it has appropriated about seven eights of the *sar-kishti* and three-fourths of the *pai-Kishti* crop. The straw falls to the share of the cultivators, but his case would be desperate if it were not practicable to bribe the overseer or watchman to let him steal a portion of his own produce. He has also a house to live in; he can keep his cattle on the mountains during summer, can cut wood and bring it to the city for sale, can sell wild greens and buttermilk, and can support himself and his family upon the wild fruits of the forest. Still the cultivators of Kashmir are in a condition of extreme wretchedness and, as if the disproportionate demand of the Government is not sufficiently oppressive, the evil is aggravated by the mode adopted in disposing of the Government share. It is sent into the market at a high price and no individual is allowed to offer the produce of his farm at a lower rate, or sometimes to dispose of it at all until the public corn has been sold". *Ibid.*, pp. 344-345.

Diwan Moti Ram and Hari Singh the first two Governors did not enjoy much popularity; they had no acquaintance with the problems of Kashmir and except for the collection of revenue with the inadequate means at their disposal, they adopted inhuman and harsh measures; but so impoverished was the country, and so indigent the people, that the two Governors could hardly satisfy their own avarice or that of the State requiring them to send a fixed revenue of 40,00,000 rupees annually.

Nazim Chunni Lal who succeeded Moti Ram was remembered as an ineffective *Nazim* whose punishments were severe. During the *Nizamat* of Diwan Chunni Lal, Kumedan Gurmukh Singh, a Sardar of strong views and rash decisions, was appointed as the Chief administrator and collector of Revenue to keep a check upon the *Nazim*⁷²⁷ and they would pay 27 lakhs and 50 thousands rupees as revenue.⁷²⁸ Gurmukh Singh reduced the *Nazim* to a non-entity. He implicated Khwaja Muhi-ud-Din, a respectable citizen in a cow-killing case. He treated the Khwaja most shabbily on specious pieces of evidence. The *Nazim* and the revenue farmer Gurmukh Singh, did not pull on well together and this resulted in deteriorating economic condition of the people and a serious drop in revenue. Chunni Lal was recalled by the *Maharaja*, but fearing a harsh treatment at the latter's hands, he committed suicide by consuming poison while on his way to Lahore.⁷²⁹

After a short period of rule by Gurmukh Singh in 1826 Diwan Kirpa Ram was appointed the *Nazim* of Kashmir on the condition that he would pay 14 lakhs for shawl trade and 26 six lakhs for the revenue of the area⁷³⁰ and was granted a special robe of honour *Nadar-ul-Maham*.⁷³¹ He

⁷²⁷ Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora, (ed.), *Politics, Society and Economy*, p. 165.

⁷²⁸ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 141; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 360; Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashat-i-Punjab*, p.134.

⁷²⁹ P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, p. 614; Amarnath *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 153, mention Diwan Chunni Lal died near Gujrat.

⁷³⁰ Amarnath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 153; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 411; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol-II, p. 578; W.L. Mc'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, London, 1846, p. 196.

like his father and grandfather was very honest and incorruptible. Diwan Kirpa Ram was an efficient and easy going official of the State; he took measures for the regular payment of the Lahore dues of Rs. 40, 00,000, out of which he was allowed to retain, Rs. 20,00,000 for the maintenance of troops in Kashmir. It was not Ranjit Singh's custom to give a regular salary to officers who were engaged in the collection of revenue, however, he gave Kirpa Ram a hefty and fixed salary of two lakhs a year.⁷³² Shaikh Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din was appointed his chief secretary or *Naib*.⁷³³ According to G.T. Vigne, "The Sikh Governor who enjoys the best reputation amongst the inhabitants of Kashmir is Kirpa Ram".⁷³⁴

While Kirpa Ram was serving as *Nazim*, a severe earthquake shook the valley.⁷³⁵ The natural upheaval lasted for two months in Kashmir. Hence, Kirpa Ram could not realise the revenue of the *kharif* crop properly. He accounted twelve lakhs as loss of revenue.⁷³⁶ After that, he administered Kashmir in an excellent manner, subdued the Khakka tribes and paid the revenue regularly.⁷³⁷ His chief advisor Shaikh

⁷³¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, p. 411.

⁷³² H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, Monograph No. 18, Patiala, 1971, p. 120.

⁷³³ Raja Ram Tota, *Gulgashat-i-Punjab*, p. 170.

⁷³⁴ G.T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit of Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan*, Vol. II, pp. 96-97.

⁷³⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 428; G.T. Vigne describes "on the night of June 26, 1828 (Twenty-fourth of Zilheja, year of the Higura, 1244) at half past ten a very severe shock was felt which shook down a great number of people; many houses, and killed perhaps 1000 persons were killed, and 1200 houses shaken down; although, being built with a wooden framework, the houses were less liable to fall than edifices of brick or stone. The earth opened in several places about the city; and fetid water, or rather warm, rose rapidly from the clefts, and then subsided. These clefts being in the soil, soon closed again and left scarcely any traces. I saw the remains of one, fifteen yards long and two yards wide; but it was filled up, by nearly huge rocks and stones came rattling down from the mountains. On that night only one shock took place, but just before sunrise there was another, accompanied by a terrific and lengthened explosion, louder than a canon. On that day there were twenty such shocks, each with a similar explosion.... The inhabitants were of course, in the open country. The river sometime appeared to stand still, and then rushed forward. For the remaining six days of Zilheja, and whole of the next two months of *Moharram* and *Safur*, there were never less than hundred, and sometimes two hundred or more shocks in the day, all accompanied with an explosion At the end of the two above mentioned months, the number decreased to ten or fifteen in the twenty-four hours and the noise became less, and the earthquakes gradually ceased. About this time the cholera made its appearance. A census of the dead was taken at first, but discontinued when it was found that many thousands had died in twenty one days." G.T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit of Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan*, Vol. II. p. 305

⁷³⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 578.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*

Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din made a rough settlement of land and introduced the system of farming out to the highest bidder the revenue of various *Pargnas* or districts. Forty lakhs was the sum paid annually in the treasury of Ranjit Singh by Diwan Kirpa Ram. The shawl trade was in flourishing condition. The tax on shawls brought about 12 lakhs of the whole revenue⁷³⁸. The rest was obtained from taxes on produce and a number of direct and indirect impositions.

Diwan Kirpa Ram introduced crows into Kashmir, considering that they were necessary to the due performance of funeral rites, as it is the customs in the Punjab to feed crows on such occasions and this valuable contribution to the fauna of Kashmir forms perhaps the most important act of Kirpa Ram's idle rule.⁷³⁹

Diwan Kirpa Ram loved luxury especially boating. Hence his name commonly used in a modified way in the valley was *Kirpa Shoriyan* to denote the jingling noise of small bells on woman's hand and feet⁷⁴⁰ for his indulgences in 'Char Chinar' an islet in the Dal Lake. He also spent time with dancing girls and prostitutes. On summer evenings Diwan Kirpa Ram was accustomed to enjoying feasts, drinking, listening to the singing of the dancing girls. The blaze of fireworks threw a brilliant glare over the scene. The term of his viceroyalty was compared by the people of the valley to those pleasant days when Jahangir used to make an annual visit there and when the valley was:

"All love and light
vision by day and feasts by night."⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁸ H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, p. 122.

⁷³⁹ W.R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 200.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

⁷⁴¹ W.R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 75; Baron Schonberg, *Travels in India and Kashmir*, Vol-II, cited in G.M.D. Sufi, *A History of Kashmi*, Vol. II, p. 731.

Diwan Kirpa Ram administered the province well. He was a man of considerable ability. He possessed an affable and gentle disposition. The administration of the valley improved during his tenure of office. Under his mild rule the people of Kashmir were able to improve themselves economically. Intelligent and having unique ideas of magnificence, he beautified Srinagar with many fine buildings. Ram Bagh, now holding the remains of most of the *Dogra* rulers on the Dudh-Ganga stream in Srinagar was built by Diwan Kirpa Ram.⁷⁴² He was the only official in the country against whom the Kashmiris had no complaint. He remained the *Nazim* for four years and was the kindest and the best of all.⁷⁴³

In the military field, Diwan Kirpa Ram had to lead a punitive expedition to Muzaffarabad where Raja Zabardast Khan, had raised a banner of revolt. In the initial stages the rebel forces, hiding in mountain recesses, inflicted severe losses on the Sikh army but the commander Ganesh Pandit Dhar created dissensions among several hill chiefs and defeated them one by one. Zabardast Khan ultimately surrendered and was pardoned on his undertaking to pay annual tribute regularly to the *Maharaja*.⁷⁴⁴

Diwan Kirpa Ram's popularity at Lahore was dependent on his punctual payment of the State dues every year, which excited the jealousy of Raja Dhian Singh, who was a powerful minister of Ranjit Singh. In 1831, Diwan Kirpa Ram again became the victim of the *Dogras* and was accused of embezzlement. He was recalled because the *Maharaja* had been prejudiced against Kirpa Ram for his protection to the Raja Faiz Talab Khan of Bhimbar who the Dogra Rajas hated and

⁷⁴² Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 360.

⁷⁴³ G.T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit of Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan*, Vol. II, p. 74.

⁷⁴⁴ P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, p. 615.

wished to capture.⁷⁴⁵ The courtiers poisoned the *Maharaja's* mind saying that the *Diwan* would revolt and never come into the presence of the *Maharaja*.⁷⁴⁶ The *Maharaja* sent repeated orders to Shaikh Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din to present Kirpa Ram. When the *Diwan* reached Lahore, he was asked to pay twenty five lakhs of rupees as the pending revenues and forty lakhs as fine.⁷⁴⁷ The *Diwan* was unable to pay and hence he was imprisoned.⁷⁴⁸ The *Toshakhania* or the treasurer of the *Diwan* was also captured. Sham Singh, the Jamadar of *Deorhi* was sent by the *Maharaja* to sequester the *Diwan's* property at Kunjah. Of all the Sikh Governors of Kashmir, *Diwan Kirpa Ram* gave the people the least cause of complaint. Yet the news of his disgrace was a signal for public rejoicing. According to Garrett, it was justified; for the least oppressive of the *Nazims* or Governors was in fact a cruel tyrant.⁷⁴⁹ On *Diwan Kirpa Ram's* recall to Lahore, the *Maharaja* appointed Bhima Singh Ardali as *Nazim* or Governor of Kashmir.

On 22 February 1831, all the glorious courtiers told the *Maharaja* about the release of *Diwan Kirpa Ram*. They said to the *Maharaja* that, "The *Diwan* had always been a well-wisher of the *Maharaja* from the core of his heart, had always faithfully stuck to the path of loyalty and had never committed any blunder and had about his neck the cord of obedience and servitude for generations".⁷⁵⁰ On this the *Maharaja* approved the release of *Diwan Kirpa Ram*. The *Maharaja* granted him one silvery white horse, eight garments, a turban gem, a plume, an under-turban, a pearl necklace and some pairs of *chadars* of *pashmina*. *Diwan*

⁷⁴⁵ Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Delhi, 2002, (Reprint), p. 196.

⁷⁴⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 578.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 581.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 581-82.

⁷⁴⁹ H.L.O. Garret, *The Punjab-A Hundred Years Ago*, p. 125.

⁷⁵⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat –ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-III (Part-III) p. 11.

Moti Ram presented nine lakhs of rupees to the *Maharaja*.⁷⁵¹ But Diwan Moti Ram began to feel upset over the ways and means of its payment.

Diwan Kirpa Ram felt disgusted and applied for permission to join his father at Banaras. The request was turned down. Diwan Kirpa Ram then sought permission to visit Jawalamukhi. It was granted. To console him the *Maharaja* granted him the *jagir* of Kunjah worth 3 lakhs on 14 December, 1831. This was a princely offer. But Kirpa Ram could not forget his imprisonment like an ordinary criminal. He spurned at it. From Jawalamukhi the *Diwan* crossed into British territory and joined his father at Banaras and never returned to the Punjab.

Kashmir during the twenty seven years of *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh's rule, had its period of prosperity and adversity both. His Hindu *Nazims* or Governors Diwan Moti Ram and Diwan Kirpa Ram to some extent discharged their duties properly. Human failures were sometimes intensified by natural calamities. Diwan Kirpa Ram tried to alleviate the suffering of the peasantry but they could not perform the Herculean task of clearing out all the abuses of revenue and the judicial system of Kashmir. Ranjit Singh was always caged help the valley out of its difficulties. On the one hand, he never hesitated to penalize corruption, oppression and inefficiency; on the other, he established colonies of Kashmiris in Punjab to help them in their days of adversity. The administration of Multan and Jalandhar was better than that of Kashmir. The system of farming out the revenues to the highest bidder so successful under Sawan Mal in Multan, miserably failed in Kashmir on account of the incompetency and avariciousness of the successive and indifferent *Nazims* or Governors and their opportunistic satellites.⁷⁵²

⁷⁵¹

Ibid.,

⁷⁵²

B.J. Hasarat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, p. 108.

The *Nazims* or Governors of Kashmir were at regular intervals reprimanded for their maladministration by the *Maharaja*.

Another Hindu Misr Ram Kishan the younger brother of Misr Beli Ram farmed Gujranwala District for a little more than a lakh of rupees which is a fertile and productive district.⁷⁵³ He also administered the District of Gujarat for one year alongwith Diwan Shiv Dayal.⁷⁵⁴ For sometime Diwan Devi Sahai alongwith Aziz-ud-Din were sent Attock as commissioner to settle the country surrounding.⁷⁵⁵ Diwan Ganga Ram appointed to administer the territories in and around Gujrat in 1821 for two years.⁷⁵⁶ Another Hindu Sukhdayal also administered the *Ilaka* of Jhang for rupees 1,60,000.⁷⁵⁷

Other Hindu Courtiers and Officials served the Lahore *Darbar* in one capacity or the other but none of them contributed or played any significant role in shaping or reorganizing the civil administrative set up of the Sikh kingdom, particularly under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. However, we have noticed in the preceding chapter that they were definitely supporting the *Maharaja* in various campaigns.

⁷⁵³ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 55.

⁷⁵⁴ J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, (Translated and ed.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, p. 66.

⁷⁵⁵ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 8.

⁷⁵⁶ J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, (Translated and ed.), *Early Nineteenth Century Punjab*, p. 66.

⁷⁵⁷ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 33; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Vol. II, p. 516; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 341.

CHAPTER -VI

DARBAR POLITICS AND INTRIGUES (1839-1849)

The demise of the great ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839 let loose a flurry of passions and ambitions which his iron hand had firmly held in check. Maharaja Ranjit Singh died on June 27, 1839, and "the six years which followed were a period of storm and anarchy, in which assassination was the rule and the weak were ruthlessly trampled under foot".⁷⁵⁸ The period, after the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, until the annexation of the Punjab, was not only crucial but of immense significance. During the span of one decade i.e. from 1839 to 1849 chaos and confusion prevailed in the Punjab and there was an atmosphere of lawlessness and unrest. This State of affairs not only terrorized the people but posed a great danger to the lives of the Hindu Courtiers and Officials at the Lahore *Darbar*. Infact, after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the Courtiers and Officials who had been loyal to the Lahore *Darbar* began to indulge in political machinations and intrigues. The Chief Nobels who had gained affluence lost moral accountability. Particularly the *Dogras* and the rest of the Sardars in general got entangled in crafty scheming and conspiratorial politics in the climate of political instability. The relations of the *Dogras* and *Sardars* with most of the *Hindus* ceased to remain cordial as before. Consequently, the political circumstances underwent a change for the worse and these courtiers and officials faced many problems at the Lahore *Darbar*.

Many opportunist and ambitious chieftains like the rajas of Jammu who had made strategic incursions during Ranjit Singh's illness , suddenly felt relieved of any kind of control and started making plans for

⁷⁵⁸ . Hugh Pearse (ed.), *Memories of Alexander Gardner*, Patiala, 1898, p. 211.

expansion .In these times of cloak and dagger politics some even indulged in hiring assassins to murder rivals. They even found it politic to pit one claimant to the throne against the other. Therefore, the newly rich upstart aristocracy was desperate to do anything for achieving their personal ends. In a fit of political rashness some even opened surreptitious negotiations with the British who were already planning the annexation of the Punjab.⁷⁵⁹ No member of Ranjit Singh's progeny except perhaps his grandson Nau Nihal Singh, could be considered a fit guardian and successor of the Khalsa Raj; and he too was prematurely removed from the political scene by an unfortunate accident.

A majority of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's able Hindu Courtiers and Officials like Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Ram Dayal and Diwan Ganga Ram had predeceased him, whereas, Diwan Moti Ram and Diwan Kirpa Ram had retired to Banaras. Only men of weaker moral integrity, some still a part of government and others who had turned traitors, survived to command the Army which naturally was straining at the leash.⁷⁶⁰ Court intrigues, accelerated by guilty ambition and disputed succession, weakened administration and created an atmosphere of uncertainty.

These intrigues were actuated by the determination of Raja Dhian Singh to maintain his power and the efforts of the rulers to establish their authority with the support of anti *Dogra* Chiefs who had their own vested interests to guard. In this race for power both the parties tried to win over the army. It will be prudent here to make a passing reference of the various factions operating in the Lahore *Darbar* after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Bhai group from U.P. exercised considerable influence on the *Maharaja*. Jamadar Khushal Singh became the royal

⁷⁵⁹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1964, pp. 520-21.

⁷⁶⁰ N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1933, p. 190.

Chamberlain in 1811 and his brother Ram Lal became the Brigadier-General in the army and his nephew Tej Singh became the commander of a division. The *Misir* family's leading man Beli Ram, was the incharge of the Royal *Toshakhana* or treasury at Lahore. Some other well known groups like those of the Attari Chiefs, Majithias, the *Fakir* Brothers and the Sandhawalia *Sardars* too exercised a great influence on the *Maharaja* in shaping the destiny of the Punjab.

An account of the role of the Hindu courtiers and their relations with the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the members of the nobility as also the conditions in which they tried to function can be useful in understanding the political realities of the period immediately after Ranjit Singh.

DIWAN DINA NATH (RAJA)

Among the men who rose to power during the later days of the Sikh empire the most remarkable was Diwan Dina Nath. The politics of Diwan Dina Nath was based on the attitude of neutrality. Dina Nath knew how to keep his ambition in check and was one man in Lahore who made no enemies at the court. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he sustained the dignity of his person and position through several years of anarchy that followed the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He served the successive rulers Kharak Singh, Nau Nihal Singh, Sher Singh and Dalip Singh without in any way compromising his position.

Historians have reproduced in their historical accounts the sequence of events attending the politically sensitive time of the sudden termination of Ranjit Singh's rule. They have dilated upon the roles assigned by history to its agents like Diwan Dina Nath and discussed how they responded to these unforeseen and precipitous times. When, "The Maharaja became very ill on the night of the 20th instant (June,

1839) at 8 O' clock and Bhais Ram Singh, Gobind Ram, Fuqeer Azeezodeen, Diwan Deenah Nath, Missur Beliee Ram, Rajaahs Dhian Singh and Hira Singh were greatly distressed at his condition. They all agreed that Kanwar Kharak Singh should be proclaimed Ruler (Raees) and Raja Dhian Singh, his Minister (Vuzeer) early in the morning and that the doors should be placed at the disposal of Raja Hira Singh⁷⁶¹". In accordance with this plan Kanwar Kharak Singh and Raja Dhian Singh went in the morning to parade and took *Nazars* from all the officers and commandants of the troops, proclaiming that the *Maharaja* had, while living raised the *Kanwar* to the Guddi, and nominated Raja Dhian Singh as his *Wazir*.⁷⁶² "The Koonwer then return to the 'Summunboorj' and held his Durbar. Faqueer Azeezodeen wrote a general order on the part of the Maharaja, and read it aloud in the Durbar, proclaiming the installation, and Diwan Dina Nath was ordered to apprise all the officers of the State. The Khillut of succession, to the Koonwer, and of vizarut, to the Raja, have not, however, been granted by the Maharaja, in consequence of its being an unlucky day, and it is deferred till a good day...."⁷⁶³.

Later in the evening, Diwan Dina Nath, Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, Fakir Nur-ud-Din, Raja Hira Singh, Dhian Singh, Keisree Singh, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Beli Ram and others, sitting in the *Maharaja's* presence, made over that the *Sardars* should now have their respective possessions granted to them by the *Maharaja* confirmed by Kanwar Kharak Singh before the arrival of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh. They entrusted Dina Nath, Fakir Aziz-ud-Din and Munshi Akram with the responsibility of preparing

⁷⁶¹ *Punjab Akhbarat*, 1839-41, pp. 129-133. cited in B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab* (1839-45) Hoshiarpur, 1969, p. 10.

⁷⁶² Osborne, *The Court and Camp of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, The Punjab Series, Vol. I, Lahore, 1895.

⁷⁶³ *Punjab Akhbarat*, 1839-41, pp. 129-133. cited in B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab* (1839-45), p. 10.

a document of the kind, which should be authenticated by the *Kanwar*.⁷⁶⁴ But in the meantime the *Maharaja's* health deteriorated further and their plan was dropped.

On the 27th June, 1839, the very day of the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Bhai Gobind Ram, Bhai Ram Singh, Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, Fakir Nur-ud-Din, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Raja Dhian Singh, Raja Hira Singh and Diwan Dina Nath held a meeting and were unanimous about the absence of their confidence in Kanwars Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh as regards their continuance in possession of the *jagirs* granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and considered it incumbent that a confirmatory deed bearing the seals of the *Kanwars* about the continuance of their *jagirs* from generation to generation and from loin to loin should be obtained from the *Kanwars*, in accordance with the regulations of the British Government.⁷⁶⁵ Diwan Dina Nath, Misr Beli Ram, Munshi Akram and Fakir Aziz-ud-Din prepared a draft of the document that the *jagirs* granted by the *Maharaja* should remain in the possession of their holders as formerly and no misunderstanding should exist between them.⁷⁶⁶ On 28 June, 1839, Kanwar Kharak Singh and Raja Dhian Singh swore by the *Granth* that the grants conferred by the *Maharaja* would continue in the possession of the present incumbents with the previous liability of the required loyalty from them as heretofore. Consequently every minister swore to this effect.⁷⁶⁷

When Kanwar Kharak Singh was crowned on the 1st September 1839, his son Nau Nihal Singh was conspicuous by his absence from the investiture ceremony. The ceremony was hastily solemnized as the

⁷⁶⁴ Ganda Singh (ed.), *The Punjab in 1839-40* (Selection from the Punjab Akhbars, Punjab Intelligence etc. preserved in the National Archives of India, New Delhi), Amritsar, 1952, p. 64.

⁷⁶⁵ Ganda Singh (ed.), *The Punjab in 1839-40*, p. 68.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁷ Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *Parties and Politics at the Sikh Court 1799-1849*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 66.

Maharaja apprehended opposition from his son.⁷⁶⁸ Both Maharaja Kharak Singh and Dhian Singh were suspicious of the designs of Nau Nihal Singh. The various parties in these critical and unstable times were in a State of dissensions and disjunctions. Bhais Ram Singh and Gobind Ram and Misr Beli Ram and Ram Kishen were political dissembles who, though keeping up appearance with Dhian Singh, were actually supporters Nau Nihal Singh; Diwan Dina Nath and the Fakir family adopted a policy of neutrality. Only Sardars Ajit Singh Sandhawalia, Jawand Singh Mokal and Attar Singh, remained partisans of the *Raja*.⁷⁶⁹

There were amongst the coterie of self-seekers, a small number of men, who refused to serve the *Darbar* as faithfully and honestly as circumstances permitted. Outstanding among them was Diwan Dina Nath, who administered the departments of revenue and finance. Man like Diwan Dina Nath was content to give advice whenever it was sought for but deliberately avoided exerting his influence on the question of men who had started asserting power through violent means.⁷⁷⁰

On 5th November, 1840, Maharaja Kharak Singh died. After the cremation of Maharaja Kharak Singh, his son Nau Nihal Singh was advancing towards the fort with a party of men. The party passed by Kharak Singh's funeral pyre, now blazing fiercely, and came to the *Roshnai Durwaza* (The gate of splendour). Just as Nau Nihal Singh was passing underneath, the arch of the gate gave way and slabs of stone and masonry crashed down on his head. Diwan Dina Nath was among one of

⁷⁶⁸ At that time Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh was in Peshawar with Gulab Singh, Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, Lahore, 1961, Punjabi Trans. p. 587.

⁷⁶⁹ Ganda Singh (ed.), *The Punjab in 1839-40*, p. 91.

⁷⁷⁰ Khushwant Singh, *The Fall of the Kingdom of Punjab*, New Delhi, 1971 (reprint), p. 6.

them who received injuries.⁷⁷¹ Nau Nihal Singh was brought to Ranjit Singh's mausoleum where he died after some time.

In the uncertain and wavering struggle between Mai Chand Kaur and Kanwar Sher Singh, Dina Nath was the only person who remained aloof and non committal.⁷⁷² He knew the art of sitting on fence. Chand Kaur's party now consisted of Bhais Ram Singh and Gobind Ram, Attar Singh Sandhawalia, Lehna Singh Sandhawalia and Ajit Singh Sindhawalia, Fateh Singh Mann, Gulab Singh Povindia, Shaikh Gulam Mohi-ud-Din, Jamadar Khushal Singh and his nephew Tej Singh, Raja Gulab Singh and Hira Singh also took up the Rani's cause enthusiastically.⁷⁷³ On the other hand Sher Singh had the backing of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Dhanna Singh Malwai, Sham Singh Attariwala, Raja Dhian Singh, Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Fakir Aziz-ud-Din and Generals Ventura and Court.⁷⁷⁴ In this struggle Rani Chand Kaur occupied the throne. According to Dhian Singh's proposal, an agreement was drawn up on November 27, with the following terms: Sher Singh was retire to Batala till the birth of a child to Sahib Kaur, but was to leave behind his son Partap Singh who was to be a member of the council of chiefs. Chand Kaur was to remain regent until then, after which other arrangements were to be made. The agreement was signed by Dhian Singh and Gulab Singh, Bhai Ram Singh and Gurmukh Singh.

⁷⁷¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV, (Part-I) Lahore, 1885, 1889, English Trans. V.S. Suri, Amritsar, 2001, p. 113. Sohan Lal Suri dilates upon the incident in some details: "After that the *Kanwar Ji* (Nau Nihal Singh) came near the gate when, somebody from the unknown universe made the whole of its roof along with the bricks of the arch fall down exactly as it was aiming the arrow of destiny at the target of the head of *Kanwarji*, with the result that according to the preordained will and the never-dying wish of the Almighty God the brain of the *Kanwar Ji* became hidden under the bricks and dust and Mian Udham Singh (eldest son of Raja Gulab Singh) consigned his life to its creator. The other persons, who were keeping company at that time, such as the Raja Kalan (Dhian Singh Dogra), the Bhais (Ram Singh and Gobind Ram), Diwan Dina Nath and several other chieftains received injuries upon their shoulders and their backs on account of the bricks. The servants of the State dug out the blessed body of *Kanwarji* from the heap of the bricks of the arch and the dust and felt very sad and grieved to see the condition of *Kanwarji*".

⁷⁷² B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, p. 104.

⁷⁷³ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol-II, Patiala, 1970, (reprint), pp. 223-225.

⁷⁷⁴ B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, p. 103.

Attar Singh Sandhawalia, Lehna Singh Majithia, Fateh Singh Mann, Mangal Singh Sidhu, Sham Singh Attariwala, Dhanna Singh Malwai, Jamadar Tej Singh, Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, Diwan Dina Nath and Shaikh Gulam Muhi-ud-Din, having been cajoled by Dhian Singh, both the parties were fully represented in the deed.⁷⁷⁵ Rani Chand Kaur became the chief authority of the State with Kanwar Sher Singh becoming President of a Council of Chiefs entrusted with the command of the army and superintendence over all departments of the State and Raja Dhian Singh being promoted to the position *Wazir*.

After some time Sher Singh became the *Maharaja*. During the reign of Sher Singh, Diwan Dina Nath and Lehna Singh Majithia along with some others maintained a discreet distance with the affairs of the State and endeavoured, as far as possible, to preserve neutrality in their conduct.⁷⁷⁶ Diwan Dina Nath was one of those in immediate attendance on Maharaja Sher Singh when he was assassinated by the Sandhawalias. On 11th September 1843, in the morning, the Sandhawalia's men were posted fully armed at different points in the city and also around the fort. After the dispersal of the *Darbar* they "began to hurl taunts and cause molestations to the men of the State by hints, loudly and secretly."⁷⁷⁷ This unanticipated demonstration caused great apprehension in the minds of Aziz-ud-Din, Bhais Ram Singh and Gobind Ram, the Jamadar Khushal Singh and Diwan Dina Nath who observed that, "quite strange and amazing things had taken place and that they must be out to see what would make its appearance from the veil of the unknown so that it

⁷⁷⁵ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, Lahore, 1865, p. 331.

⁷⁷⁶ Clerk to Maddock, February 14, 1841; 151/29; Punjab Government Records, cited in B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, p. 143 hereafter read it P.G.R.; According to Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-III), p. 275; "As soon as Sher Singh's accession was assured Diwan Dina Nath declared for him and became his favourite.

⁷⁷⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-III), p. 250.

might become known to them what God wished and for whom God showed a liking.”⁷⁷⁸ At the time of Maharaja Sher Singh’s murder none of the *mutsaddis*, officers or friends, happened to be there except the *Maharaja's* favourite Diwan Dina Nath and Raja Hira Singh.⁷⁷⁹ Totally without suspicion, the *Maharaja* moved out of the room to inspect the troops. After the inspection had been conducted, he bade Dina Nath to prepare the roll of these men.⁷⁸⁰ The *Diwan*, too, came out in the open at his bidding. Griffin offers a different view about Diwan Dina Nath's position. According to him "Dina Nath was standing immediately behind Sher Singh when the Sindhwalias entered the apartment. He would in all probability have been wounded or killed by the shot which killed the *Maharaja*, had not Mehr Khasitah, a Sandhawalia Vakil, who was in the plot, drawn him aside, pretending to have something important to communicate to him.”⁷⁸¹

Diwan Dina Nath continued to retain his influential position during the inept *Wazarat* of Hira Singh, taking tactical advantage of the differences of Pandit Jalla⁷⁸² with Gulab Singh.⁷⁸³ When Hira Singh entered into a quarrel with his uncle, Raja Gulab Singh, in the first half of October, Diwan Dina Nath, Bhai Ram Singh and Shaikh Imam-ud-Din were sent on deputation to Jammu with the express errand of bringing about an adjustment of differences with Gulab Singh⁷⁸⁴ and their mission was completely successful. They returned bringing with them, as

⁷⁷⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-III), p. 250.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid*; W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, Allahabad, 1979, (reprint) p .15.

⁷⁸⁰ W.L. Mc' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 15; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, Patiala, 2003 (reprint) p. 419.

⁷⁸¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 137.

⁷⁸² Pandit Jalla was Tutor and Chief Adviser of Hira Singh Dogra.

⁷⁸³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. IV, (Part-III), p. 333.

⁷⁸⁴ *Foreign Department : Secret Consultation*, 23 November 1844, 16 October, 1844, No. 99, National Archives of India, New Delhi, (Here after read it NAI); Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV, (Part-III), p. 302; Diwan Kirpa Ram, *Gulabnama*, MS, M/1358, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, English Trans. by Sukhdev Singh Charak, p. 252; Carmichael Symth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, Calcutta, 1847, p. 122.

a surety, Mian Sohan Singh, the son of Raja Gulab Singh, who was murdered with his cousin Hira Singh, not long afterwards.

Dina Nath was also the founder and leader of the *Mutsaddi* –a faction which comprised of the moderate old guard of Ranjit Singh's time like the Lahore *Vakil* (Rai Kishan Chand) the British political agent, besides Bhai Ram Singh and Fakir Aziz-ud-Din and Nur-ud-Din. Withdrawal of their support to Hira Singh completed the ruination of the ministry whose days were now numbered. The Secretariat of the Government was composed of men who were despised by the ignorant *Sardars* yet were influential and able with their seasoned and much practiced cunning accustomed to be deployed as defence against force. At the head of such as these was Diwan Dina Nath. According to B.R. Chopra, "this man was much trusted by the existing Government and he acquired great power. His regular emoluments were considerable, but his power and profit depended mainly on his extensive patronage in the revenue management of the territories directly administered under his administration and in the civil departments of the army".⁷⁸⁵ The former swelled in its extent by the resumption of *jagirs* but also got attenuated due to Pandit Jalla's vigorous administration. The *Diwan*, for a time, indemnified himself through additional appointments in the army. But, a few weeks before the revolution occurred Pandit Jalla turned his attention to this subject and ruthlessly truncated the dimensions and size of the various establishments. In some cases, only one tenth of the writers or *Munshis* of the revenue department were retained. Diwan Dina Nath, through Bhai Ram Singh, communicated to Pandit Jalla that he was also losing by these cuts and retrenchments, but the Pandit's cold answer showed that the *Diwan* was no longer indispensable. He,

⁷⁸⁵ B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, p. 336.

therefore, secretly joined the opposite, faction.⁷⁸⁶ Aziz-ud-Din and Bhai Ram Singh also acted in concert with Diwan Dina Nath.

At the time of Hira Singh's death, Jawahar Singh, the debauched and abominable brother of Maharani Jindan, obtained the chief power, but Diwan Dina Nath still held office. He was one of the most trusted officials of Rani Jindan with whom she shared several affinities. Both had experienced all the ravages of revolutions in which kings rose and fell and most of the prominent Statesman perished. Diwan Dina Nath was the member of council of Ministers reconstituted by Rani Jindan in 28 December 1844.⁷⁸⁷ The other members of this councils were : Sardar Jawahar Singh, Raja Lal Singh, Bhai Ram Singh, Bakshi Bhagat Ram, Sardar Attar Singh Kalianwala, Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala, General Mehtab Singh and General Mewa Singh Majithia and General Lal Singh Moranwala. Diwan Dina Nath was the principal adviser of Rani Jindan and the army *Panchayats* and wielded considerable influence in moderating their aggressive tone towards the British Government. The attempt at governing through the council, however, failed, and the Rani and her brother, for all practical purposes themselves transacted all business of the State, whether the council was sitting or not.

After the murder of Prince Peshora Singh,⁷⁸⁸ the troops rose in mutiny, and decided to kill Sardar Jawahar Singh, who had been the

⁷⁸⁶ *Broadfoot to Currie*, December 27, 1844; 164/24, P.G.R. cited in B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, p. 336.

⁷⁸⁷ Hugh Pearse (ed.), *Memories of Alexander Gardner*, p. 263.

⁷⁸⁸ After Sher Singh's assassination in 1843, when the army had proclaimed minor Dalip Singh as the *Maharaja*, both Peshora Singh and Kashmira Singh revolted at Sialkot, and claimed the throne. The town was besieged by Lahore troops and pretenders submitted, but were finally pardoned. In March 1845, at Gulab Singh's instigation, Peshora Singh revolted again. A Sikh force again invested Sialkot and compelled him to flee northwards. He raised an insurrection in the hills and in July he captured Attock, proclaimed himself a sovereign of the Sikhs, and made an offer of Peshawar to the Afghans for help in fighting the republican army. From Attock Peshora Singh carried on negotiations with Dost Muhammad Khan which extremely annoyed the army *Panchayats* and also the British were loath to see the deposition of Dalip Singh recently recognized by them and the surrender of Peshawar. Nothing, however, came out of Peshora Singh's negotiations with the *Amir* of Afghanistan. Chattar Singh, the Governor of Hazara, was ordered by the *Darbar* to reduce the pretender to submission. After a nominal resistance, Peshawar Singh

instigator of it. The *Sardar* was much alarmed, prepared the fort for defence. The army *Panchayats* had by this time effectually assumed the power of Government; they resolved, on 19 September, the Jawahar Singh must die as a traitor and communicated this decision to him and to the Rani.⁷⁸⁹ Rani Jindan was told that she must hand over her brother, or else, she and the *Maharaja* might have to share the same fate. They avoided compliance and sent Diwan Dina Nath, Fakir Nur-ud-Din, and Attar Singh Kalianwala, Bakshi Bhagat Ram, Raja Lal Singh to negotiate.⁷⁹⁰ The troops immediately made them prisoners, releasing Nur-ud-Din⁷⁹¹ who they sent to warn the Rani that the dated 20 was the latest day to which the option of surrendering her brother would be left to her. Nur-ud-Din, having fulfilled his mission, was honourably dismissed but the other prisoners were insulted, threatened and derided by the soldiery. Four battalions of infantry were actually dispatched from Mian Mir towards the city. Accordingly, the Rani, her son and Jawahar Singh started for Mian Mir on the afternoon of the dated 21 and arrived there soon after sunset. Maharaja Dalip Singh, his mother, and attendants were conducted to their tents and Jawahar Singh put to death, by sword and musket in the *howdah* of his elephant.⁷⁹² On the 22 morning, Rani Jindan, who had still great influence with the troops, reproached them for her brother's death and threatened to destroy

surrendered on a promise of personal safety. While being conveyed to Lahore, he was murdered at the orders of the newly appointed *Wazir* Jawahar Singh, the debauched brother of Rani Jindan. For detail see B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Hoshiarpur, 1977, pp. 224-225.

⁷⁸⁹ Sita Ram Kohli (ed), by Khuswant Singh, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, New Delhi, 1964, p. 96.

⁷⁹⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-III), p. 330.

⁷⁹¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-III), p. 331, According to Diwan Ajudhia Prashad, , *Waqai-jang-i-Sikhan (Events of the first Anglo-Sikh War, 1845-46)*, English Trans. by V.S. Suri, Chandigarh, 1975, p. 75. Nur-ud-Din also made prisoner.

⁷⁹² Kanihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881, Punjabi Translation, Jeet Singh Seetal, Patiala, 1968, p. 383. Charles Gough and Arther D. Innes, *The Sikh and the Sikh Wars*, London, 1897, p. 331; Huge Pearse(ed.), *Memories of Alexander Gardner*, pp. 260-61.

herself and her son. The *Panchayat* released Diwan Dina Nath and Sardar Attar Singh Kalianwala with orders to soothe her. Sardar Jawahar Singh's body handed over to Rani for cremation and they returned back to the fort. They also allowed Diwan Dina Nath and Sardar Attar Singh Kalianwala to accompany her. Jawahar Singh was burnt with his four wives the same evening and Diwan Dina Nath present on the part of the Rani Jindan. The unfortunate women who were to burn with the body were shamefully treated by the soldiery, who stripped them of their jewel and tore their nose-rings away.⁷⁹³ In this moment of extreme distress and suffering, the ladies cursed the Sikh soldiery and prayed to God for their destruction.⁷⁹⁴

The *Panches* decided that although matters of fundamental policy should be determined by them, the details of their execution should be handed by Ministers whom they could trust. Diwan Dina Nath and Fakir Aziz-ud-Din were the two men whose integrity could not be impugned. The *Fakir* was anxious to withdraw from active life, particularly as he disapproved of the measures being taken against the English. The choice therefore fell on Dina Nath whose first job was to announce the execution of Jawahar Singh. Dalip Singh was to continue nominally as the *Maharaja* of the Punjab with his mother Rani Jindan as Regent. Diwan

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Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-III), p. 334.

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Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, p. 604; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p.258, Kanihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 384. Broadfoot writes, "Suttees are sacred and receive worship- their last words are considered prophetic, their blessing eagerly sought and their curses dreaded. Diwan Deena Nath, the Ranee, the Maharaja and others prostrated themselves before them and obtained their blessings. This was repeated at the pile by Deena Nath and by the Ranee and her son etc. by proxy. The suttees blessed them but cursed the Sikh *punth*- at the pile they were asked the fate of the Punjab and declared that during the present year its independence would cease, that the Sikh sect would be conquered, the wives of the Sikh soldiers be widows and the country desolate, but that the Ranee and her son would live long and happily and the Maharaja continue to reign. These prophecies made a great impression on the superstitious multitudes and I (Broadfoot) mention them on that account, and because they doubtless express the opinions of persons about the Durbar." *Broadfoot to Currie*, September 26, 1845; 167/36, P.G.R. cited in B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, p. 412.

Dina Nath, Bhai Ram Singh and Raja Lal Singh were appointed Principal advisers of Rani Jindan.⁷⁹⁵

After this, Diwan Dina Nath clearly perceived that while the army remained as powerful as lawless as it then was, there was no safety for him or for any man who filled a conspicuous position and with Raja Lal Singh, whose motives were similar to his own, and the Maharani who longed to avenge her brother's death, he began to encourage in the army a desire for a war with the English, from which the conspirators hoped it would never return. When the passion of the troops were sufficiently inflamed, a great council was called at Shalimar, early in November, and here the *Diwan* made an address to eloquent, artful and impassioned, that all present unanimously declared for war. In an eloquent address, Diwan Dina Nath confirmed some of these reports. According to Giani Gian Singh that he referred to reports that in the Cis-Satluj States the high handed British agent was treating the Sikhs as if they were subjects of his government. He drew attention to the depleted State of the treasury not a single rupee, he said being forthcoming from Kashmir or Peshawar. Diwan Dina Nath also said our *Maharaja* is a child and we have no chief. He offered the Rani's proposal, that Lal Singh be appointed *Wazir* and Tej Singh commander of the armies, with unlimited authority in the event of hostilities. This was accepted without demur though neither Lal Singh nor Tej Singh had any distinction to recommend them.⁷⁹⁶ The eloquent speech made such an impression on the *panches* of the *khalsa* and the *Sardars* assembled, that there was a unanimous cry for war and the appointments proposed by Rani Jindan were acceded to with loud acclamations. The result of that war is well known.

⁷⁹⁵ Hugh Pearse, (ed.) *Memories of Alexander Gardner*, p. 263; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 260.

⁷⁹⁶ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, pp. 440-441.

After the first Anglo-Sikh War, Diwan Dina Nath was one of the signatories of the treaty of 9 March 1846.⁷⁹⁷ In October 1846, arrangements were begun for bringing Lal Singh to trial his role in the Kashmir debacle. Lal Singh was tried by a British Court, found guilty of duplicity and sentenced to be exiled from Punjab.⁷⁹⁸ At that time, Diwan Dina Nath, defended him in court, agreed that having been proved guilty he should be externed.⁷⁹⁹ Shaikh Imam-ud-Din produced the very letter, in the handwriting of Puran Chand, the State *Parwana* navis or to clerk, signed by Lal Singh, which he had privately sent to him enjoining him on no account to deliver up the territory to Gulab Singh. The guilt of Lal Singh was clearly proved. Lal Singh deposed from the office of Minister and was informed that he was not permitted to enter the palace. He was escorted to his own house by Mr. Edwards, Assistant to Colonel Lawrence, surrounded by a guard and was shortly after banished from Lahore to Agra fort on Pension.

After Lal Singh's dismissal, the powers of Government were invested into a council of four, Tej Singh, Sher Singh Attariwala, Diwan Dina Nath and Fakir Nur-ud-Din.⁸⁰⁰ A circular, was sent to all government officers in the *Muffasil*, to this effect and that no *parwana* was to be considered valid unless it bore the seal of all four councillors. This Government, however was not intended to last long and soon after four other influential chiefs were added to the number, constituting under the authority of the Governor General, a Council of Regency.

⁷⁹⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, p. 629; Punjab Government Record, Document No. 26, Punjab State Archives, Patiala ; W.L. Mc' Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 241.

⁷⁹⁸ Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, MS 1885, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Punjabi Trans., Jeet Singh Sital, p. 55;.

⁷⁹⁹ Khushwant Singh, *The Fall of the Kingdom of Punjab*, p. 113.

⁸⁰⁰ Debi Parshad, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lucknow, 1872, Punjabi Translation by Harminder Singh Kohli, *Gulshan-i -Punjab*, Patiala, 2003, p. 132; Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, p. 126; Khushwant Singh, *The Fall of the Kingdom of Punjab*, p. 113.

When in May, 1846 the fort and town of Kangra and some hilly territory between the Satluj and Beas were ceded to the British by the treaty of Lahore. Sunder Singh Qiladar, in command of some 300 men in the fort, when asked to vacate, replied that he would open the gates to no one except the *Maharaja* of Lahore. Officers of the *Darbar* such as Diwan Dina Nath, Ranjodh Singh Majithia, Diwan Devi Sahai and Misr Rup Lal were in turn sent to persuade the garrison to deliver up possession of the fort but met with the same answer.⁸⁰¹ On the occasion the *Diwan's* influence or desire to use it, was not very strong, and it was not till a fortnight after he came, that the fort surrendered. The arrival of heavy siege guns from the plains had perhaps more to do with the surrender, than the persuasions of Diwan Dina Nath.

Undoubtedly Diwan Dina Nath, was the most able member of the council.⁸⁰² The other members of the council of Regency at Lahore *Darbar* were : Sardar Tej Singh, Sardar Sher Singh Attariwala, Fakir Nur-ud-Din, Sardar Ranjodh Singh, Bhai Nidhan Singh, Sardar Attar Singh Kalianwala, and Sardar Shamsheer Singh Sandhawalia. Although Dina Nath's position as Head of Financial Department, give him many opportunities of enriching himself at the public expense, of which there is every reason to believe he availed himself, he still worked more disinterestedly than others, and was of great service to the Resident at Lahore. With his help it would have been almost impossible to disentangle the *Darbar* accounts. Whenever the new settlement papers of any district are submitted to the *Darbar*, Diwan Dina Nath produces his *Aieen* from the *Daftar* and laments the extraordinary *tukhfeef* conceded by the sahibs to the *Zamindars*.⁸⁰³ In 26 November, 1847, Diwan Dina

⁸⁰¹ . Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, p. 122.

⁸⁰² . Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol-II, p. 490.

⁸⁰³ . *Lahore Political Dairies*, 1847-1849, Vol. V, p. 306.

Nath was raised to the dignity of *Raja* of Kalanour.⁸⁰⁴ The following is the honorary title he received on the occasion: *Khair andesh-i-daulat-i-alia, dyanatdar, mushir-i-khas, madar ul muham.*"⁸⁰⁵ He received at the same time a *jagir* of Rs. 20,000 from the *Ilaka* of Kalanour.⁸⁰⁶ The *Diwan* was not a popular man at this time as before. The retrenchments which the lavish expenditure of the late ministers had rendered imperative were very distasteful to the Sikh Sardars and solidery and Diwan Dina Nath with Sardar Tej Singh, came in for his full share of odium.

In April, 1848, Diwan Mulraj *Nazim* of Multan rebelled. On receiving the first report from Agnew on 21st April, Sir Frederick Currie, on 24th sent under the command of Diwan Dina Nath, Sher Singh Attariwala and Sardar Shamsheer Singh Sandhawalia with the troops made available,⁸⁰⁷ but was soon afterwards recalled.

When Sardar Chattar Singh Attariwala, had turned traitor, and the mission of Sardar Janda Singh Butalia to reclaim him had failed. The Governor of North-West Frontier with several colonels discussing the probability of Diwan Dina Nath being able to arrange matters with Sardar Chattar Singh.⁸⁰⁸ The Resident sent Diwan Dina Nath to endeavour to influence him.⁸⁰⁹ This mission also failed as former one, for Sardar Chattar Singh backed by the Sikh nation, had determined to try one more the fortune of war. Some there were who said that Raja Dina Nath was a traitor at heart, that he had himself encouraged the rising, and that had he not been a wealthy man with houses and gardens and

⁸⁰⁴ *Foreign Department: Secret Consultation*; 31 December, 1847; No. 185 NAI; Ganesh Das Wadehra, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 55.

⁸⁰⁵ *Foreign Department: Secret Consultation*; 31 December, 1847; No. 185. NAI.

⁸⁰⁶ *Foreign Department: Secret Consultation*; 31 December, 1847; No. 185. NAI. According to Debi Parshad, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 137; Dina Nath received the *Jagir* of 21,000 rupees.

⁸⁰⁷ Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, p. 144.

⁸⁰⁸ *Lahore Political Dairies, 1846-49*, Vol. III-IV, p. 551; Evans Bell, *Annexation of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1983 (reprint), p. 73.

⁸⁰⁹ *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, 25 November, 1848; No. 243, N.A.I.

many lakhs of rupees in Lahore, convenient for confiscation, he would have joined the rebels without hesitation; but these stories perhaps invented by his enemies. Raja Dina Nath didn't like the measures adopted by the British Government for punishing the rebels by the confiscation of their *jagirs* and the attachment of their houses and property and for counteracting the plots of the insurgent.⁸¹⁰ After the annexation of the Punjab Diwan Dina Nath was confirmed in all his *jagirs*, worth Rs. 46,460 which he held till his death, in 1857.

THE MISR FAMILY

MISR BELI RAM

Beli Ram was equally prominent courtier at the Lahore *Darbar* in the life time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. We have already discussed his role as a Chief *Thoshakhana* in chapter II. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh his influence and role in the *Darbar* politics is not less than any other courtier and official at Lahore *Darbar*. He became the victim of the intrigues of the Lahore *Darbar*. As Earlier said Misr Beli Ram was one of the courtiers who agreed that Kanwar Kharak Singh should be proclaimed ruler and Raja Dhian Singh his minister.⁸¹¹ When the *Maharaja* died on June 27, 1839, Misr Beli Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Fakir Aziz-ud-Din and Munshi Akram were present there. At this time Misr Beli Ram observed that in case of the unwillingness of Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh to put their seals to the document. The drafted having been fairly transcribed, Munshi Akram and Misr Beli Ram urged that, "God forbid, If the Koonwars do not come to an understanding with the *aid de camps* and the chiefs, they should act in concert with each other and the meeting observed, as it is customary with the British authorities

⁸¹⁰

Ibid.

⁸¹¹

For detail see, p.. 192.

the whatever the member of the councils do, is approved and confirmed by the king of England, we have come to this resolution like the members of council and therefore, such resolution is mature and very proper."⁸¹²

Let it be already noted that Maharaja Kharak Singh was crowned on 1st September, 1839. Misr Beli Ram occupied positions of trust and power during Maharaja Kharak Singh's short rule when they earned the enmity of Raja Dhian Singh and Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh.⁸¹³ Beli Ram and his brothers were opponents of the *Dogras* at Lahore *Darbar*.⁸¹⁴ The *Misr* family had not only been amongst the earliest and the most devoted of Ranjit Singh adherents, but also of his father Mahan Singh. From the confidence reposed in them by the late *Maharaja* they had always been an object of Dhian Singh's jealousy which exhibited itself some years back in a personal quarrel between the *Raja* and Misr Ram Kishan.⁸¹⁵ The position had worsened since the new accession, because Kharak Singh relied all the more on Beli Ram to the exclusion of the Jammu Rajas.⁸¹⁶ So long as the *Misr* continued to occupy their existing prominent positions, the *Raja* could hardly feel his own position secure. Misr Beli Ram support Sardar Chet Singh, favourite of Maharaja Kharak Singh, who became the Prime minister of the *Maharaja*. Chet Singh had the courage to put himself forward as a rival to the all powerful Dhian Singh. Misr Beli Ram and Ram Kishan, Bhai Ram Singh and Gurmukh Singh became the Chief advisers of the Sardars who flagrantly interfered in State affairs. On September 2, 1839, Raja Dhian Singh observed to the

⁸¹² Ganda Singh (ed), *The Punjab in 1839-40*, p. 69.

⁸¹³ B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, p. 267.

⁸¹⁴ Earlier on 1 August, 1839 a dispute broke out between Misr Beli Ram and Lala Kannihya Lal, *Vakil* of the dignified Sardar Nihal Singh Ahluwalia, with respect to the problems of the boundaries and limits of the *Doaba*. The *Misr* thoughtlessly and heedlessly used many harsh and degrading words for Raja Dhian Singh, while the said Lala too, did not keep his mouth shut. Raja Dhian Singh felt a hart rending dust settle upon the mirror of his enlightened conscience on learning about the words of the *Misr*. For detail see, Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-1), p. 27.

⁸¹⁵ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 212.

⁸¹⁶ B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45* p. 31.

Maharaja in the *Darbar* that Beli Ram was very little attentive to his orders.⁸¹⁷ Raja Dhian Singh Dogra was dead set against the *Misr* Brothers and due to his manoeuvres Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh also became their enemy.

After the murder of the Chet Singh on 8 October, 1839, by the order of Dhian Singh, Misr Beli Ram and Misr Ram Kishan were put in fetters, a sentinel guard was set upon the *Toshakhana* and the horsemen were ordered to capture Misr Megh Raj and Misr Rup Lal.⁸¹⁸ The ostensible cause of the arrest of Misr brothers was their association with Sardar Chet Singh.⁸¹⁹ According to Murray Beli Ram and his brothers were put in irons, "upon the plea that he (Beli Ram) had refused to show the heir- apparent the treasury."⁸²⁰ Hardit Singh, brother of Chet Singh was arrested and confined in Kangra Fort. The properties of Misr Beli Ram and his brothers were confiscated.⁸²¹ Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh thought of killing them, but owing to their being *Brahmins*, did not; as it is they will suffer a heavy punishment. On October, 1839, Misr Beli Ram being brought before Raja Dhian Singh and Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, was ordered to be beaten and was asked where the missing pearl string worth many lakhs of rupees, and the precious daggers were? He replied that a few pearls out of the string and the daggers were still in treasury. The *Raja* told him he also would have been killed, had not the *Kanwar* kindly interceded for him and the *Misr* resigned himself to the *Kanwar's* will. The captive *Misr* requested permission to eat and drink which had

⁸¹⁷ Anon, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, p. 75, cited in B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45* p. 21.

⁸¹⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (1), p. 67.

⁸¹⁹ *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, November 6, 1839, No. 24-B, pp. 1-9, N.A.I.

⁸²⁰ Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 168.

⁸²¹ Lieut Col. Steinbach, *The Punjab : Being A Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, Patiala, 1883, p.17; Ganda Singh (ed), *The Punjab in 1839-40.*, p. 238; Misr Beli Ram's Property which were confiscated amounting to nearly one crore of rupees. Fauja Singh and M.L. Ahluwalia (ed.), *Maharaja Kharak Singh*, Patiala, 1977, p. 67.

been denied to him for two days."⁸²² They imprisoned the *Misr* and his brother for three months.⁸²³ Maharaja Kharak Singh was particularly bitter about the imprisonment of Misr Beli Ram and his brothers and in his frustration about obtaining their release, often raved like a madman threatening very often to invoke the aid of the British. He was feeling restless and perturbed only day and night at the tragic end of the family to which he was much attached. Still more, the confinement of Misr Beli Ram and his family upon whose support and attachment to his interest he could confidently rely, had rendered him utterly helpless. The agitated State of the *Maharaja's* mind increased the anxiety of Nau Nihal Singh who became apprehensive of some serious results, if his condition did not improve. He conferred the districts of Pathankot and Nurpur in *Jagir* on Sardar Mangal Singh who promised to procure from the *Maharaja's* Razinama' absolving the *Kanwar* from the murder. Maharaja Kharak Singh, however told the *Kanwar* and his partisans that if they wished to please him, they should produce Hardit Singh and release Misr Beli Ram and his brothers from confinement. To this, Nau Nihal Singh and other replied that they were ready to give a written engagement to produce Hardit Singh within a month and that with regard to release of Beli Ram, they would consult the Minister,⁸²⁴ for Nau Nihal Singh would not displease the latter who was very much averse to the *Misr's* release. His own interest too did not favour the measure as the *Misr's* might prove a greater hurdle in his way that Chet Singh had done. They might prove a ready instrument in the hand of the *Maharaja* for regaining his supremacy and might serve as a channel of his intrigues with the English.

⁸²² B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45* p. 31.

⁸²³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part 1) pp. 67, 95, According to Lepel Griffin they remained in prison for six months, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1940, p. 363.

⁸²⁴ Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, Patiala, 1970, p. 54.

Further, the *Bhais* had been recommending the *Kanwar* to release Misr Beli Ram and his family and so was Maharaja Kharak Singh.⁸²⁵ The *Kanwar* had at last, in league with the *Bhais* made up his mind to release the *Misrs*.⁸²⁶ The *Kanwar* proposed to exact in writing from Beli Ram that he had been guilty but that he be pardoned, that he would render faithfully an account of the *Toshakhana* and that then he would be liberated.⁸²⁷ On this Beli Ram replied that he would write whatever he was desired by the *Maharaja* and the *Kanwar*. On January 10, 1840, the *Misr* were summoned by the *Kanwar* and were made to take oath of fidelity and were then set free and restored to their old situations.⁸²⁸ Beli Ram presented a written engagement to give the *Kanwar* a *Nazrana* of five lakh of rupees on the delivery of which the latter was highly satisfied, though the *Maharaja* appeared much offended at this.⁸²⁹

The release of Misr Beli Ram and his brother who were the sworn enemies of the *Dogra* chiefs, greatly upset the *Raja*. The first time a serious difference occurred was over the release of Misr Beli Ram. Dhian Singh asked for leave to go home and he left on 20 January 1840.⁸³⁰ During his absence, the Sandhawalias, Ajit Singh and Attar Singh,

⁸²⁵ Abstracts of Intelligence from Lahore: December 1 to 7, 1839, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, May 4, 1840, No. 120 NAI; Abstracts of Intelligence from Lahore: dated December 15 to 21, 1839, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, May 18, 1840, No. 260. NAI.

⁸²⁶ Abstract from Intelligence from Lahore dated January 5-11, 1840, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, May 18, 1840, No. 239 NAI. Previously when Bhai Ram Singh recommended the release Misr Beli Ram and his family, the Prince replied that they would be released in concert with Raja Dhian Singh. Abstract from Intelligence from Lahore dated January 12-15, 1840, *Foreign Department Secret Consultations* February 17, 1840, No. 30; Abstract from Intelligence from Lahore dated December 1-7, 1839, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, May 4, 1840, No. 120, NAI.

⁸²⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-I), p.95. When the *Misr* presented before Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh he (Beli Ram) said that "he was living upon the salt of the sarkar since three generations and was a sinner and an offender and requested that his past mistakes be pardoned and promised that henceforth he would never do any such improper act, but would remain constant and firm on the straight path of obedience and loyalty." For detail, Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar V (Part-I), p.96.

⁸²⁸ Abstracts of Intelligence from Lahore dated January 5 to 11, 1840, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, May 18, 1840, No. 239, NAI.

⁸²⁹ *Wade to Maddock*, January 15, 1840; 148/17. P.G.R. cited in B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45* p. 45.

⁸³⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-1), p. 100.

Jamadar Khushal Singh, all of whom were inimical to Dhian Singh, sought to widen the breach between the *Raja* and the Prince.

Next came up the question of the their restoration to their former situations. But, before this could be settled, it was thought necessary to examine the *Toshakhana* in charge of Beli Ram. Shaikh Gulam Muhi-ud-Din and Diwan Dina Nath were ordered to examine it and then Bhais Ram Singh and Gobind Ram and Jamadar Khushal Singh were to go there to inspect the various things of *Thoshakhana*.⁸³¹ Bhai Ram Singh observed that, "the *Misrs* were well known for their integrity and fidelity to the State."⁸³² The examination of Misr Beli Ram's *Toshakhana* being over and nothing found missing. Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, proposed, that if Kharak Singh did not object he would give the charge of *Toshakhana* of Beli Ram to Tek Chand, his own servant. This enraged the *Maharaja* who warned the *Kanwar* that if he did anything inimical to Beli Ram, it would be detrimental to his own interests and directed him to leave everything incharge of the *Misr*.⁸³³ The *Maharaja*, moreover, insisted that Beli Ram and his brothers should be presented with *Khillats* and restorted to their old situations "as they were not guilty of any crime and were faithful servants of the Government".⁸³⁴ Nau Nihal Singh observed that their representation would offend Raja Dhian Singh who was one of the sincere well wishers of the Government and in his absence several public affairs had been disordered. The *Kanwar* thought it proper to adopt the middle course. Hence, on January 25, 1840, Beli

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, p.95.

⁸³² This favourable disposition of Bhai Ram Singh etc., towards the *Misrs* was due to the fact that the former had received from the *Misrs* a bribe of rupees two lakhs, besides one lakh of rupees being distributed among Sardar Fateh Singh, Jamadar Khushal Singh and Sardar Tej Singh. Abstracts of Intelligence from Lahore: January 12 to 15, 1840, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, February 17, 1840, No. 30. NAI.

⁸³³ Abstracts of Intelligence from Lahore: January 15 to 11, 1840, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, May 18, 1840, No. 239. NAI.

⁸³⁴ Abstracts of Intelligence from Lahore: January 19 to 21, 1840, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, February 24, 1840, No. 76, NAI

Ram was restored to his old situation of incharge of the *Toshakhana*, but was directed to act in concert with Bhai Tek Chand, the servant of Nau Nihal Singh.⁸³⁵ The delivery was obtained by payment a *nazrana* of 5,00,000 rupees to the *Kanwar*.⁸³⁶ *Kanwar* tried to satisfy both the parties, viz. Kharak Singh and Dhian Singh but actually displeased both and worsened the position.⁸³⁷ Misr Beli Ram and Ram Kishan requested the restoration of their property which had been lately forfeited. On this the *Maharaja* replied that it would be restored.

During the reign of Maharaja Sher Singh, Misr Beli Ram restored to his old post of *Toshakhana*. When Sher Singh ascended the throne on January 20, 1841, he support him with Bhai Gurmukh Singh⁸³⁸, Nihal Singh Ahluwalia, Dhanna Singh Malwai, Generals Court and Ventura, the three *Dogra* Rajas, Aziz-ud-Din, Sham Singh Attariwala and Shamsheer Singh Sandhawalia. Beli Ram was much in the confidence of Maharaja Sher Singh⁸³⁹ and in conjunction with his friend, Bhai Gurmukh Singh, he was endeavouring to form a party against Dhian Singh Dogra.⁸⁴⁰ But his intrigues cost him his life. Misr Beli Ram and Bhai Gurmukh Singh became a party to the murder of Maharaja Sher Singh and *Wazir* Dhian Singh. When Raja Hira Singh succeeded his father as minister of the Sikh Kingdom of Lahore, soon after Raja Hira

⁸³⁵ Abstracts of Intelligence from Lahore: January 22 to 25, 1840, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, March 15, 1840, No. 40 NAI.

⁸³⁶ Abstracts of Intelligence from Lahore: January 5 to 11, 1840, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, May 18, 1840, No. 239. NAI.

⁸³⁷ He refused to give a document acquitting Nau Nihal Singh from the Murder of Chet Singh, unless the *Kanwar* restored Beli Ram to the independent charge of the *Toshakhana* and punished those who had insulted the *Maharaja* on the occasion of the murder of Chet Singh. Abstracts of Intelligence from Lahore: January 19 to 31, 1840, *Foreign Department; Secret Consultations*, March 30, 1840, No. 55. NAI.

⁸³⁸ Bhai Gurmukh Singh was supported by no powerful party. He has been many years on terms of intimate friendship with the *Maharaja*. He has no weight of character or ability and will never coalesce with the *Raja*, who can seldom exclude him from his highness presence; *Clerk to Maddock*, March 15, 1842, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

⁸³⁹ Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, Delhi, 1977 (reprint), p. 232.

⁸⁴⁰ B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, p. 189.

singh, at the instigation of Bhai Ram Singh and Misr Lal Singh, arrested Bhai Gurmukh Singh with his friend Misr Beli Ram and his brother Misr Ram Kishan and made them over to the custody of Shaikh Imam-ud-Din, Governor of the Jalandhar Doab, who killed them during the night on the 16 September, 1843.⁸⁴¹

MISR RUP LAL

As we earlier Stated in the Chapter V Misr Rup Lal was very efficient Governor of Jalandhar. After Ranjit Singh's death Misr Rup Lal also became the victim of the intrigues of the Lahore *Darbar* and was replaced by Gulam Muhi-ud-Din as *Nazim* of Jalandhar. Prince Nau Nihal Singh, who nursed a grudge against Misr Beli Ram for supporting his father's favourite Chet Singh, threw him and his brothers into prison in October 1839, immediately after the murder of Chet Singh. As a result of the obstinate demand of Maharaja Kharak Singh, Misr Rup Lal was released.⁸⁴² When Sher Singh ascended the throne, Misr Rup Lal appointed as Governor of Kalanaur and the lands of the Lahore State south of the Satluj, with orders to resume the fort and domain of Bharatpur from Jamadar Khushal Singh. When Misr Beli Ram became imprisoned, he wrote a letter to his brother, Misr Rup Lal, who was in Kalanaur at that time, Informing him that his circumstances had taken a different turn and so he should go away to put up in some safe place.⁸⁴³ But he was again imprisoned in September 1843 by the orders of Raja Hira Singh. Misr Rup Lal was place discharge of Misr Lal Singh his old enemy. Rup Lal, more fortunate remained in confinement till the fall of

⁸⁴¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-III), pp. 259; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 229.

⁸⁴² Abstract of Intelligence from Lahore from 22-25 January 1840, *Foreign Department : Secret Consultations*, 15 March, 1840, No. 40, N.A.I.

⁸⁴³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*,, Daftar IV (Part-III), p. 259.

Raja Hira Singh in December 1844. When he was released, he was made Governor of Jasrota by the minister Jawahar Singh.⁸⁴⁴

After the first Anglo Sikh war, when in May 1846, the fort and town of Kangra and some hilly territory between the Satluj and Beas were ceded to the British by the treaty of Lahore, Misr Rup Lal, with other officers, Diwan Dina Nath, Ranjodh Singh Majithia, Diwan Devi Sahai were sent to take the possession of the fort.⁸⁴⁵

Miser Rup Lal was at Jasrota in 1846, when by the treaty of Amritsar dated 16 March, the province of Kashmir and the States of Jammu and Kohistan were transferred to Raja Gulab Singh. The *Raja* vehemently accused Misr Rup Lal of treason in not yielding up the hill territories in accordance with the terms of the treaty. So he was accordingly removed from Jasrota by the *Darbar*. After this he placed in charge of Rohtas and Jehlum, Kala, Pukowal, Pudree, Sungoe, Choutala, Darapur, Rampur and Jalalpur⁸⁴⁶ and was there when the second Anglo Sikh war broke out. He joined with his sons, the forces of Sardar Chattar Singh Attariwala. As a result after the war, all his *jagirs* and property were confiscated by the British Government and Gouhar Mal appointed *kardar* in his place. He died in September 1865, upwards of eighty years of age, at Dalwal in the Jehlum District.⁸⁴⁷

MISR MEGH RAJ

Misr Megh Raj also became the victim of the intrigues by Raja Dhian Singh with his brothers. He was incharge of the treasure in the fort of Gobindgarh at Amritsar.⁸⁴⁸ As earlier Stated that the *Misr* family imprisoned after the murder of Chet Singh and Misr Megh Raj released

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁵ Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, p. 122

⁸⁴⁶ *Lahore Political Dairies 1847-49*, Vol. V, p. 15; *Lahore Political Dairies*, 1847-49, Vol. VI, p. 357.

⁸⁴⁷ Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, p. 362.

⁸⁴⁸ B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45* p. 31

with his brothers.⁸⁴⁹ After the release of Misr Megh Raj, Nau Nihal Singh released the family of Misr Megh Raj, confined in Gobindgarh and ordered an examination of the treasure in that fort of which Megh Raj had held charge. He succeeded his brother Beli Ram as the Chief *Toshakhana*, who continue to serve, for some time, even under the British Government after the annexation of Punjab.⁸⁵⁰ After the Satluj campaign, on the occasion of a visit of the Governor General to Lahore he received the title of *Rai Bahadur*.⁸⁵¹

MISR RAM KISHAN

Ram Kishan was made Chamberlain to Ranjit Singh, who always treated him with special kindness. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh he supported Maharaja Kharak Singh and became the chief adviser of Chet Singh, with his brother Beli Ram. From the confidence reposed in them by the late *Maharaja*, they had always been object of Dhian Singh's jealousy which exhibited itself some years back in a personal quarrel between the *Raja* and Misr Ram Kishan.⁸⁵² After the murder of Chet Singh, he was imprisoned.⁸⁵³ Misr Ram Kishan was released him with his brothers due to the endeavours of Maharaja Kharak Singh.⁸⁵⁴ In February ,1840, Maharaja Kharak Singh sent Misr Ram Kishan to khator to look after the interests of the State in that

⁸⁴⁹ Abstract of Intelligence from Lahore from 22-25 January 1840: *Foreign Department : Secret Consultations*, 15 March, 1840, No. 40, N.A.I.

⁸⁵⁰ Bhagat Singh, "Court and Courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol- XIV, 1980, p. 100.

⁸⁵¹ Lepel Griffin, *Chief and Families of note in the Punjab*, Lahore, 1940, p. 365.

⁸⁵² Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 212. It took place when Misr Ram Kishan stopped Raja Dhain Singh's entarnce at *Deorhi* when he proceeded as usual to the *Darbar* and high words were exchanged on either side, which went so far that the *Raja* proposed to regine , but the officers of the court interposed and brought about a partial reconciliation; Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and the Afghans*, p. 21.

⁸⁵³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV(Part-1), p.67

⁸⁵⁴ Abstract of Intelligence from Lahore from 22-25 January 1840 : *Foreign Department : Secret Consultations*, 15 March, 1840, No. 40, N.A.I.

quarter.⁸⁵⁵ During the *Wazarat* of Hira Singh, Ram Kishan was murdered with his brother Beli Ram in 16 September, 1843.⁸⁵⁶

MISR SUKH RAJ

Sukh Raj was fifth brother of Misr Beli Ram, was a commander of several battalions of Infantry during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the murder of Chet Singh he was imprisoned with his brothers and released due to the endeavours of Maharaja Kharak Singh.⁸⁵⁷ He died in 1842.⁸⁵⁸

DIWAN SAWAN MAL

During the kingship of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Sawan Mal increased his power day by day but he never became rebel. His was little disturbed but he paid his tribute with regularity; there was no cause of complaint. Dogra brothers hatred him. Diwan Sawan Mal was the arch opponent of the minister Raja Dhian Singh and his brother Gulab Singh and Suchet Singh whose influence at the court of Ranjit Singh is usually all powerful.⁸⁵⁹ After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the *Dogra* brothers attempted to destroy him but they are not successful in their mission.

During the reign of Maharaja Kharak Singh, Diwan Sawan Mal, who sometime ago received orders to construct at Mitten-Kot a small fort, he accordingly commenced upon the same.⁸⁶⁰ In Multan, he, with a view to encourage trade by river, has ordered a *Gunj* or mart to be built at Adamwan opposite to Bahawalpur, and as an inducement for merchants and others to resort to it, had reduced the inland duty of Merchandize

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*p.122

⁸⁵⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-III), pp. 260; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, p. 229

⁸⁵⁷ Abstract of Intelligence from Lahore from 22-25 January 1840: *Foreign Department : Secret Consultations*, 15 March, 1840, No. 40, N.A.I.

⁸⁵⁸ Lepel Griffin, *Chief and Families of note in the Punjab*, p. 36.

⁸⁵⁹ G.T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit of Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan*, Vol. II, London, 1840, p. 23.

⁸⁶⁰ Ganda Singh (ed.), *The Punjab in 1839-40*, p. 221.

one half. Several of the most wealthy and influential merchants of Multan have established a branch of their firms there.⁸⁶¹ One circumstance reflects the highest credit to him, in Multan exists not a single robber in the whole territory under his sway.⁸⁶²

Under the Regency of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, *Dogra* brothers became all powerful at the court and was proposted to demand from Diwan Sawan Mal half a million sterling (fifty lakhs) and summoned to Lahore to render his accounts in September, 1840.⁸⁶³ If he refused to obey, it was the intention of the *Darbar* to send troops to compel him. Due to his cleverness, he succeeded in the evasion of examination of his accounts. For this purpose, he bribed Bhais Ram Singh and Gobind Ram with a lakh of rupees, Raja Dhian Singh and Hira Singh fifty thousand rupees, Diwan Dina Nath twenty five thousand rupees, Sardar Fateh Singh Mann twenty five thousand rupees and Rani Chand Kaur with a lakh of rupees.⁸⁶⁴ When amicable arrangements were made, he returned in peace to Multan.

In March 1841, when Maharaja Sher Singh had just obtained the supreme power, Dhian Singh tried to poison the *Maharaja's* mind against Diwan Sawan Mal and get rid of him. The *Maharaja* directed both Dhian Singh and Diwan Sawan Mal to raise new units with which to replace some of the turbulent Khalsa soldiery.⁸⁶⁵ In compliance with his order Diwan Sawan Mal began to raise Muhammadan troops, with the greatest activity with the real object of defending himself against Dhian Singh. On the other side Raja Dhian Singh was not less energetic, hoping with his

⁸⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶² *Foreign Department : Secret Consultations*, 24 August, 1840, No. 115, N.A.I.

⁸⁶³ *Foreign Department: Secret Consultation*, 20 October, 1840 No. 107-09 NAI.

⁸⁶⁴ *Foreign Department: Secret Consultation*, 20 October, 1840 No. 107-09 NAI.

⁸⁶⁵ Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *Parties and Politics at the Sikh Court 1799-1849*, New Delhi, 1992, p. 117.

new troops, not only to overwhelm Sawan Mal, but to defend Jammu both against the Sikhs and the British.

On 16 December, 1841, the *Raja* urged the *Maharaja* to remove Diwan Sawan Mal from Multan as he was not satisfied with him.⁸⁶⁶ But the *Maharaja* asked the *Raja* to remain silent until the arrival of Raja Gulab Singh and Kanwar Partap Singh at Lahore. In order to harass the *Diwan*, he was asked to render the accounts of Multan. On 23 April, 1842, Diwan Sawan Mal reported that he had governed the Multan district for many years to the best of his ability and now he was called to account due to the misrepresentations of some interested people. He expressed his readiness to pay whatsoever was due from him and besought the *Maharaja* not to listen his enemies. Devi Ditta his nephew, was ordered to ask his uncle (Sawan Mal) to render the accounts and not to postpone it.

In January, 1842 the Mazari tribe, which had always given trouble to Sikh governors and made a decent upon Rojhan with the hope to plunder it before the arrival of help. But Diwan Sawan Mal marched against them, and they were compelled to return.

Like the *Dogra* brothers, Bhai Gurmukh Singh was not an amicable towards the *Diwan* too because he was on cordial terms with Bhais Ram Singh and Gobind Ram. Since the time of Ranjit Singh, Bhai Gurmukh Singh had been a rival of Bhais Ram Singh and Gobind Ram. He is reported to have observed that "the Diwan was afraid, since the fall of Bhais Ram Singh and Gobind Ram's Power, and that he was night and day engaged in arranging his own affairs, or in correspondence with Bhais, and the Sandhawalias."⁸⁶⁷ On the 26 April, 1842, reports at Ludhiana wrote about the correspondence between Diwan Sawan Mal

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 120.

⁸⁶⁷ Jagjiwan Mohan Walia, *Parties and Politics at the Sikh Court 1799-1849*, p.120.

and the Sandhawalia chiefs, who were the position of Rani Chand Kaur. On this Raja Dhian Singh observed that the *Maharaja's* servants were very disloyal. Though Raja Dhian Singh and Bhai Gurmukh Singh were against Diwan Sawan Mal, he was so firmly established that they could not succeed in supplanting him. Later on, when Raja Dhian Singh was assassinated by the Sandhawalia Sardar, the *Diwan* was free from the ablest of his enemies.

But all the members of the *Dogra* family hated him. Raja Gulab Singh was nerves of Diwan Sawan Mal, a clever, moderate, and influential man, a more faithful servant of the Sikh State than himself and the irreconcilable enemy of his family.⁸⁶⁸ Raja Hira Singh because Pandit Jalla, his minister and master hated him. The design of Pandit seems to have been to destroy Raja Gulab Singh by directing the Sikh army against Jammu and afterwards destroy Diwan Sawan Mal and others by similarly gratifying the love of plunder and excitement, natural to a body of soldiers. Later in December 1844, Pandit Jalla were also murdered by the troops. Moreover, Diwan Sawan Mal had been in close contact with the British authorities since the days of Ranjit Singh. Though these years, Sawan Mal had been strengthening himself at Multan and he made his fort at Multan almost impregnable to a native force. There is every reason to believe that he intended at some favourable opportunity, to throw off his allegiance to Lahore and declare his independence. It was with this intention that he expended so much money and labour upon his fort at Multan. In 1844, 3 regiments of cavalry and 46 small and big cannons under his command.⁸⁶⁹

Diwan Sawan Mal had a tragic end. "On the 16 in the evening Diwan Sawan Mal was riding past the jail in the city a prison, an Afghan

⁸⁶⁸ *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation: 23 March 1849; 16 November, 1849, No. 210. NAI.*

⁸⁶⁹ Debi Prashad, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 178.

seized a pistol from one of the Guards and fired at the Diwan. The Diwan fell from his horse and was immediately removed to his residence but in a State of insensibility. It was found that the ball had passed through the upper part of the left side. In the morning the *Diwan* had somewhat recovered. He gave large sums in charity and directed that the man who fired at him should be put to death."⁸⁷⁰ As a result of that wound he died on September 29, 1844.⁸⁷¹ At the time of his death he was nearly fifty years of age. Thus perished the wisest and best of all Sikh governors. He continued in office till his last breath. He was a man of great Vigour and ability and the prosperity of the province is mainly attributable to his administration.⁸⁷² Diwan Sawan Mal had left seventy lakhs of Rupees in cash and also jewels and other property to the same amount in the fort of Multan.⁸⁷³ He was succeeded as *Nazim* of Multan by his eldest son Mulraj.⁸⁷⁴

DIWAN KIRPA RAM

Earlier Stated Diwan Mohkam Chand's family became the victims of Dhian Singh Dogra during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His grandson Diwan Kirpa Ram due to the intrigues of the *Dogra* family left the Lahore *Darbar* and went to Banaras. During the reign of Maharaja Kharak Singh, in February 1840, Sardar Attar Singh Sandhawalia made an efforts secretly to prepare Diwan Kirpa Ram, the rival and enemy of

⁸⁷⁰ Hari Ram Gupta (ed.) *Punjab on the Eve of the First Sikh War*, Hoshiarpur, 1956, p. 304.

⁸⁷¹ *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, 26 October, 1844; No. 90. NAI; Hari Ram Gupta (ed.), *Punjab on the Eve of the First Sikh War*, p. 323 Sir H.B. Edward has given a different account of the manner in which the *Diwan* met his death. He States that assassin was a soldier, who had served Sawan Mal faithfully and who came to *Darbar* to ask for his pay and discharge. That Sawan Mal refused to grant these just demands, and caused the petitioner to be stripped of sword and shield and turned out of *Darbar*. That in revenge for the grievous insult the soldier shot him. For details see H.B. Edwards, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, 1848-49, London, 1851. p.74.

⁸⁷² Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. II, p. 238.

⁸⁷³ Hari Ram Gupta (ed.) *Punjab on the Eve of the First Sikh War*, p. 303.

⁸⁷⁴ *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, 26 October, 1844; No. 90 NAI; Murray, *History of the Punjab*, Vol II, p. 238.

Raja Dhian Singh to return.⁸⁷⁵ The *Sardar* pursued the object of his mission continuously for six long months, but having failed to persuade Kirpa Ram to return to the *Darbar*, he himself returned to the Punjab in September. The *Diwan* was wise in keeping out of the Lahore politics, for the adventure might have cost him his life at the hands of the Jammu Rajas who were too resourceful to be so easily supplanted. Rani Chand Kaur had been insisting on the recall of Diwan Kirpa Ram a rival of Dhian Singh, to the *Darbar* on finding Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh not inclined to her views, the Rani had also been trying to obtain the *Darbar's* permission to proceed beyond the Satluj for the purpose on the pretext of a pilgrimage to the Ganga and visiting the holy place of Thanesar. But the *Kanwar* would put it off.

After the death of Maharaja Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh, Rani Chand Kaur, again tried to recall Diwan Kirpa Ram. Her men now wrote to Attar Singh Kalianwala who had gone with Kharak Singh's and Nau Nihal Singh's ashes to Hardawar, to bring him back.⁸⁷⁶ But there was not much certainty about the *Diwan's* agreeing to return because Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, Bhai Gurmukh Singh and Dhian Singh were definitely in Sher Singh's favoure, although the first assumed outwardly the appearance of neutrality. Maharaja Sher Singh also tried to recall Diwan Kirpa Ram. Letters were issued firstly to Sham Singh Attaiwala and then Ajit Singh that they should necessarily bring Diwan Kirpa Ram along with himself.⁸⁷⁷ But he never returned to Lahore and died at Banaras.

DIWAN AJODHIA PRASHAD

⁸⁷⁵ Abstract of Intelligence from Lahore dated from 18-19 February 1840 : *Foreign Department : Secret Consultations*, 27 April, 1840, No. 82, N.A.I.

⁸⁷⁶ *Clerk to Maddock*, December 11, 1840; 150/55. P.G.R. cited in B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45* p. 112.

⁸⁷⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar IV (Part-III) pp.222-223

At the time of the *Maharaja's* death, Ajodhia Prashad was with the brigade at Peshawar, where it had been stationed for two years. At the close of 1839, he was with Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia, directed to accompany the army of the Indus, under Sir John Kean, from Attock to Ferozepore, which was reached on the 31 of December, 1839.⁸⁷⁸ Diwan Ajodhia Parshad was one among those persons who has enjoyed the confidence with Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh.⁸⁷⁹ His attention and anxiety to meet the wishes of the General were warmly acknowledged by that officer. In April and May 1840, the brigade with General Ventura and Ajodhia Parshad, was sent against Kahan Singh Bedi, who had murdered his nephew, seized his fort of Malsian in the Jalandhar Doab and imprisoned his family.

Later in the year Ajodhia Parshad with Ventura was sent against the Mandi Chief who had omitted to pay his tribute since the death of Ranjit Singh.⁸⁸⁰ Mandi was covered with little forts, besides the strong fort of Kamalgarh. The *Raja* of Mandi was frightened by the force sent against him and gave in his submission and was directed to proceed to Lahore. The town of Mandi was occupied, and most of the forts dismantled. Kamalgarh, however, held out and while its seize was in progress news arrived of the deaths of Maharaja Kharak Singh and Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh. This news in some measures raised the courage of the garrison. But the sieze was vigorously pressed and at length the fort surrendered on the 29 November. Bhai Ram Singh praised the wisdom and policy of General Ventura and Diwan Ajodhia Parshad in apprehending the Mandi *Raja* and settling the affairs at the place and they were promised *Khillats*. He got the *Khillats* of 8 *parchas* and 1 pair

⁸⁷⁸ Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, p. 274.

⁸⁷⁹ Fauja Singh and M.L. Ahluwalia (eds.), *Maharaja Kharak Singh*, p. 121.

⁸⁸⁰ Fauja Singh and M.L. Ahluwalia (eds.), *Maharaja Kharak Singh*, p. 121.

of gold bangles, worth Rs. 500.⁸⁸¹ The General Ventura and Ajodhia Parshad, leaving a Sikh garrison in it marched to repress disturbances which had broken out in Kulu. General Ventura gave the charge of the brigade to Ajodhia Parshad and himself left for Lahore in the beginning of January, recalled by Raja Dhian Singh, who wished for his support to the claims of Prince Sher Singh. Reinforcements had been despatched from Lahore to Kulu, and when these arrived *Fauji-Khas* heard that the troops in Lahore had received large gratuities from Maharaja Sher Singh with four months pay. Only two months pay had been brought for them, so they rose in mutiny, seized the treasure in their camp and killed several of their officers. Ajodhia Parshad, who had considerable influence with the men, restored order and promised to obtain for the brigade whatever the Lahore troops had received.

When Ventura left the Punjab on leave in March 1840, Ajodhia Parshad retained the command, though it was placed nominally under the little Prince Partap Singh. Ajodhia Parshad did the first task against Jawala Singh, the agent of the Maharaja Sher Singh.⁸⁸² Maharaja Sher Singh moved out against him. Ajodhia Parshad, with the *Fauj-I-Khas* and supported by artillery, was directed to formidable brigade, Jawala Singh surrendered. He afterwards died in Prison in the fort of Sheikhpura.

Maharaja Sher Singh paid to the *Fauj-i-Khas* the gratuity promised to them in Kulu by Ajodhia Parshad and to the *Diwan* himself he made valuable presents. At the end of 1843, when General Ventura finally left

⁸⁸¹ Ganda Singh (ed.), *The Punjab in 1839-40*, p. 227.

⁸⁸² Jawala Singh had hoped to be *Wazir* when master become king and the office had been promised to him by Sher Singh. Raja Dhian Singh had however, no intention of vacating the post; to the *Maharaja* he insinuated suspicions of Jawala Singh's loyalty; and he warned Jawala Singh of the *Maharaja's* intentions against him, till at last the wretched man was driven into treason, and being encamped with five thousand irregulars at the Dera Charyari near Shalabagh, refused to obey the *Maharaja's* order to come into Lahore. Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, p.275.

the Punjab, Diwan Ajodhia Parshad now took command of the brigade and held it till the close of the Satluj campaign.⁸⁸³

During the troubled administration of Raja Hira Singh, when almost the entire Sikh army had become unmanageable, it was Ajodhia Parshad's *Fauj-i-Khas* which maintained order and discipline. When Hira Singh fled from Lahore and was pursued by Sardar Jawahar Singh and the Sikh army the *Fauj-i-Khas* remained on the plain below the citadel, to guard the person of the young *Maharaja*. Jawahar Singh added Rs. 3,000 per mensem, to Ajodhia Parshad's pay, and gave him the village of Mauza Khan, Gang, Shadian, Muradi and Kathianwala, in the Hafizabad district.⁸⁸⁴ After the murder of Sardar Jawahar Singh, Tej Singh who was hated by the army was appointed commander-in-chief of the regular forces, and Raja Lal Singh of the irregular. When the *Fauj-i-Khas* was ordered to Peshawar it distinctly refused to obey. In 1844, Diwan Ajodhia Parshad commanded the forces of 4 regiments of cavalry, 2 regiments of infantry and 34 small and big cannons including the *Sikhs* and *Muslims*.⁸⁸⁵ When the Satluj campaign closed he tendered his resignation, which was accepted and he left the corps which he had served for twenty six years.

After the treaty of March 1846, Ajodhia Prashad appointed Commissioner along with Captain Abbot to determine the boundary line of the Lahore and Jammu territories.⁸⁸⁶ On 22 February 1847 he received *jagir* of Rs. 11,000.⁸⁸⁷ On 26 November, 1847 he had received the honorary title of *Mumtaz-ud-daulah* (Eminent in the State)⁸⁸⁸.

⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁴ Hari Ram Gupta (ed.), *Punjab on the Eve of the First Sikh War*, p. 277.

⁸⁸⁵ Debi Prashad, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 177.

⁸⁸⁶ *Lahore Political Dairies, 1846-49*, Vol. III-IV, Allahabad, 1911, p.3; Bhagat Singh, "Court and Courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", p.98.

⁸⁸⁷ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 494.

⁸⁸⁸ *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*; 31 December 1847; No. 185.NAI.

During the second Anglo Sikh war he remain loyal to the British Government.⁸⁸⁹ At annexation he was in possession of Rs. 5,000 per annum cash allowance, besides the villages of Nainsukh, Balu Salu, Chogian, Kot Nao, Khanpur, Khatianwala, Shadman, Gang and Muradi worth Rs. 19,000 per annum. After annexation of the Punjab he was appointed to take charge of the young Maharaja Duleep Singh in conjunction with Dr Login.⁸⁹⁰ He accompanied Duleep Singh to Fatehgarh in 1849 and remained in attendance on him till September 1851.

BAKSHI BHAGAT RAM

Bakshi Bhagat Ram was another important courtier whose influence at Lahore *Darbar* was no less than other courtier and official. He was appointed *Bakshi* or paymaster during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and he held his position throughout the reign of Maharaja Kharak Singh. He was extremely popular with the army and after the assassination of Sher Singh his influence became very great. In 1841, Maharaja Sher Singh granted him a *jagir* worth Rs. 3000 in Ajnala and Surapur in addition to his salary.⁸⁹¹ He was considered a leader of the *Mutsaddi* party as they were popularly known.⁸⁹²

In March 1845, Bakshi Bhagat Ram went to Jammu with the expedition against Raja Gulab Singh and his great influence with the troops induced Raja Gulab Singh to bestow upon him enormous presents. But Bhagat Ram was very near loosing, for when the army had brought Gulab Singh to Lahore, the prince professed his willingness to guarantee to the troops a higher rate of pay as an incentive, provided

⁸⁸⁹ Foreign Department; Secret Consultation; 27 January, 1849; No. 10. NAI

⁸⁹⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar V. pp.174-75.

⁸⁹¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 255.

⁸⁹² Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, p. 97; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab 1839-45*, pp. 335-336.

that all the chiefs contributed according to their means and the *Bakshi* he put down for a donation of five lakhs of rupees, which was in reality less than he had received at Jammu.

Bakshi Bhagat Ram was one of the members of council of Ministers reconstituted by Rani Jindan on 28 December 1844.⁸⁹³ Maharaja Dalip Singh granted him a new *jagir* worth Rs. 8,000 at Datarpur in Jalandhar Doab.⁸⁹⁴ In 22 February 1847, he received Rs. 14 daily from the British Government.⁸⁹⁵ At the close of 1847, when John Lawrence, the officiating Resident, was attempting to introduce some order and system into the Sikh administration, Bakshi Bhagat Ram was directed to render the army account, which he had not done for several years. When he failed to render the accounts, his *jagirs* were forfeited. Even after he had been absolved of every charge, the *jagirs* were not restored.

RATTAN CHAND DUGGAL

When Nau Nihal Singh was in power he was appointed manager of Dhanni, Kalar Kahar and Rupowal, on a salary of Rs.4,320 per annum.⁸⁹⁶ During the reign of Maharaja Sher Singh his influence increased considerably. But after his murder during the *Wazarat* of Raja Hira Singh Dogra, he was fined heavily by Pandit Jalla in 1844, but this was remitted through the intercession of Bhai Ram Singh. In February 1845, Rani Jindan dispatched a small number of her own trusted *Sardars* and secretaries to negotiate with Raja Gulab Singh; among them were Diwan Rattan Chand Duggal, Sardar Fateh Singh Mann, Sardar Sher Singh Attariwala and Baba Mian Singh Bedi.⁸⁹⁷ Raja Gulab Singh very cunningly started delaying the matter's coming to a definite

⁸⁹³ Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, p. 91.

⁸⁹⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 256.

⁸⁹⁵ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 494.

⁸⁹⁶ Debi Parshad, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 448.

⁸⁹⁷ Sita Ram Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, p. 92.

settlement, as he wished to gain time to create dissensions in the Sikh army and to win over as many of their leaders through venal means as he possibly could. Rattan Chand's first report to Lahore spoke confidently of approaching a speedy agreement. Thus, Gulab Singh secured further delay in operation against him.

After much altercation and violent language, Gulab Singh actually paid to the deputation four lakhs of rupees as an earnest of his intention to pay whatever was just. But on the same day, on their way back, the deputation was ambushed outside Jammu and the treasure carried off. Fateh Singh Mann and Wazir Bachna were killed. Rattan Chand Duggal was also wounded.⁸⁹⁸ Gulab Singh expressed sorrow at the incident and expressed his innocence in the matter, but detained Rattan Chand Duggal, Baba Mian Singh and Sher Singh Attariwala in Jammu, probably to serve as hostages and negotiators, if required.

Rattan Chand Duggal got the villages in *jagirs* Binjo Walla, Dewan Kote, Thattah and Fukrullah etc.⁸⁹⁹ During 1848-49 the action of Rattan Chand Duggal was aroused some suspicion and his *jagirs* were forfeited with the exception of two gardens, one at Lahore and other at Wazirabad, upon which he had expended much money.

RATTAN CHAND DHARIWALA

Rattan Chand Dhariwala was employed in the postal department and continued his service under the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Rattan Chand happened to be in the Lahore fort when the Sandhawalia chiefs seized it and Raja Hira Singh believing him their accomplice, fined him Rs. 30,000.⁹⁰⁰ This punishment was, later on

⁸⁹⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. IV (Part-III) pp. 314, 315; Broadfoot, *The Career of Major George Broadfoot*, London, 1888, p. 287.

⁸⁹⁹ *Lahore Political Dairies, 1847-1849*, Vol. VI, p. 9.

⁹⁰⁰ Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol. I, p. 310; Rattan Chand said he had nothing but his life but he wrote a note, promising to pay 50,000 rupees. Hari Ram Gupta (ed.), *Punjab on the Eve of the First Sikh War*, p. 214.

reversed by Sardar Jawahar Singh, after the death of *Wazir* Hira Singh Dogra and the money realized earlier given back. After the Satluj campaign Rattan Chand was appointed Postmaster-General in the Punjab and did excellent service throughout the rebellion of 1848-49.⁹⁰¹ After the annexation of the Punjab, certain of his *jagirs*, amounting to Rs. 6,800 were released to him for life, free of all service and a garden near the Shahalmi Gate of Lahore was released to his male heirs in perpetuity.

KISHAN CHAND (RAI)

Kishan Chand was doing his service as a Lahore agent. In 1 November 1839, he went to Wazirabad to receive Colonel C.M. Wade and offer him welcome on behalf of the *Maharaja*.⁹⁰² The title of '*Rai*' was conferred on Kishan Chand by Prince Nau Nihal Singh in 1840. As the members of this family were well wishers of the Jammu *Rajas*, they were suspected by other party in the court of Maharaja Sher Singh. After the death of Maharaja Sher Singh the position of the agents of Lahore on the British frontier underwent a considerable change. Rai Kishan Chand exercised certain civil and criminal powers in the Lahore protected States, and drew them considerable wealth. In spite of the jealousy and opposition of Fakir Aziz-ud-Din to most of his policies, he received support of some powerful friends chief among whom were Bhai Ram Singh and Diwan Dina Nath.

Kishan Chand did his best to maintain a good understanding between the Lahore *Darbar* and the British Government and protested strongly against the first Anglo-Sikh war of 1845-46 when it became imminent. When the Sikh army was preparing to cross the Satluj he was ordered by the political agent to leave and retire into the Lahore territories which he did. After the war the family lost its *jagirs* on the left

⁹⁰¹ Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and families of Note in the Punjab*, p. 310.

⁹⁰² Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, IV (Part-1), p. 75.

bank of the Beas. In 22 February 1847, Kishan Chand received the *jagir* of Rs. 1,000.⁹⁰³ He was directed to attend on the agent of the Governor General at Lahore till 1848, when he received permission to retire to Batala.

MISR RALLIA RAM

Misr Rallia Ram, in 1841, during the reign of Maharaja Sher Singh, discovered at Makhad, in the Rawal Pindi district, a sulphur mine, which so pleased Maharaja Sher Singh that he granted him a *jagir* of Rs. 11,000 in the Jandiala *Ilaka*, with a Persian title of honour.⁹⁰⁴ In 1847, he was appointed *Kardar* of the district of Jhang.⁹⁰⁵ He took interest in the improvement of cultivation and induced the *Zamindars*, to betake themselves vigorously to the cultivation of land. Miser Rallia Ram had considerable knowledge of trade and the management of the salt mines. The chief merchants of Meeanee were happy and satisfied with the arrangements made by Misr Rallia Ram. He established Patrols of 20 sowars at four places in the *Bar*, between Pind Dadan Khan and Ram Nagar for the protection of the *kafilahs*.⁹⁰⁶ The merchants said that there were two advantages in the *Misr's* superintendence. A Merchant who paid his 20,000 rupees got his 10,000 maunds of salt *pukka* without any diminution and the salt now obtained was far better than that formerly made over to them, being cleaner and of finer quality.⁹⁰⁷ The other arrangements⁹⁰⁸ which he did, the miners are now paid daily at the mine instead of every fortnight. Secondly, that not a pound of salt leaves the mine without being weighed; weight being previously an item which

⁹⁰³ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 494.

⁹⁰⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 47.

⁹⁰⁵ E.B. Steedman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab 1874-1880*, Lahore, 1882, p. 39.

⁹⁰⁶ *Lahore Political Dairies 1847-49*, Vol. V, p. 137.

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 365.

⁹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 141-142

opened the door for great rascality and consequent discontent. Thirdly, cash is taken on the spot for salt delivered. The employees who worked in the salt mines praised the *Misr's* management, who appears to have had the happy tact of pleasing every body.⁹⁰⁹ But the *Baniyas* of Khushab were much discontented with Misr Rallia Ram's new salt arrangements of which ready money was the principal.

At Pind Dadun Khan he constructed a road which is of great service to the salt merchants whose camels travel from the city to the river and in Bar Meeanee district Misr Rallia Ram has stationed sowars along the road for the protection of travellers.

In September 1847, the whole customs of the country were placed under the superintendence of the *Misr* and his son, Sahib Dayal. During the second Anglo-Sikh war of 1848-49, he remained loyal to the British⁹¹⁰ and after the annexation of the Punjab, his *jagirs* of Rs. 11,000 and a cash allowance of Rs. 6900 were maintained to him for life.⁹¹¹

MISR SAHIB DAYAL

Misr Rallia Ram's son Misr Sahib Dayal was made chief of the customs of Jalandhar in 1839 and held this appointment till the annexation of the Punjab. In 26 November 1847, Misr Sahib Dayal received the title of "*Muhsin-ud-Daluah Berber*".⁹¹² Lawrence in his letter to Elliot praises "we are indebted for the arrangements of the custom line. He and his father bear better characters than any two men in the Punjab."⁹¹³ During the second Anglo-Sikh War 1848-49, he also remained faithful to the British like his father.⁹¹⁴ In June 1848, three

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 396

⁹¹⁰ *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, 27 January, 1849; No. 10, N.A.I.

⁹¹¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 50.

⁹¹² *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, 31 December 1847; No. 185, N.A.I.

⁹¹³ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁴ *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, 27 January, 1849; No. 10, N.A.I.

months after the outbreak at Multan, Bhai Maharaj Singh, having collected a large number of disaffected men, set out from the Majha to join the rebel Mulraj, at Multan. None of the Sikh troops would attempt his arrest but Misr Sahib Dayal attacked and dispersed the armies of Bhai Maharaj Singh.⁹¹⁵ Misr Sahib Dyal was selected by the resident in November 1848, to accompany the Headquarters of Commander-in-chief, Lord Gough as the chief officer on the part of the Lahore Darbar.⁹¹⁶

After the annexation of the Punjab *jagirs* of Rs. 5,180 was confined on him with a cash allowance of Rs 2,800 for life.⁹¹⁷

DIWAN HAKIM RAI

When Nau Nihal Singh obtained supreme power, he gave to the *Diwan*, who had served him so well a *jagir* worth Rs. 10,000 in the Sialkot District.⁹¹⁸ He had governed the *ilaka* of Rawalpindi.⁹¹⁹ For a long time, he enjoyed great respect and was made the Supreme Judge of the *Adalat-i-Ala*. Although he was against war with the British yet such was his loyalty to his Government that he was the first to cross the Satluj on a reconnaissance in force in 1844 during the first Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46. In 1846, he was sent to Kashmir to subdue Imam-ud-Din, who on the instigation of Wazir Lal Singh, was not surrendering the area of Raja Gulab Singh as per the treaty of Amritsar dated March 16, 1846.

⁹¹⁵ Evans Bell, *Annexation of the Punjab*, New Delhi, p. 72.

⁹¹⁶ Evans Bell mention, Misr Sahib Dyal was a good as his ward: and he and his people kept their promise faithfully. On arriving at Jhang, Bhai Maharaj Singh's force had diminished to about 1000 or 1200 men; the *Misr's* party immediately attack them and though really inferior in numbers they were fresh, while their opponent were hungry and tried by a long and harassing retreat. A great many of the rebels were killed in the encounter and three or four of Misr Sahib Dayal's men and then or twelve wounded. The whole rebel force was driven into the Chenab a difficult river to cross at all times and now formidable from being much swollen by the rains and the melted snow. It is calculated that from 500 to 600, horse and foot, perished in the river- among the rebels, Bhai Maharaj Singh. Three hundred of the rebels were taken by the *Misr's* soldiers in boats and put into confinement in Jhang. Bhai Maharaj Singh's four officers, Sikhs of some note, were among the prisons and are now on their way to Lahore in irons. Evans Bell, *Annexation of the Punjab*, p. 72

⁹¹⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 50.

⁹¹⁸ Ganda Singh (ed.), *The Punjab in 1839-40* p. 166; Hari Ram Gupta (ed.), *Punjab on the Eve of the First Sikh War*, p. 104.

⁹¹⁹ Debi Parshad, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 180.

In April 1847, the *Diwan* was sent, at the recommendation of the Resident to Peshawar, as Chief Justice and Civil Governor in the room of Sardar Chattar Singh Attariwala.⁹²⁰ The appointment he did not hold for long because he had many enemies in *Darbar* and chief of them was Sardar Tej Singh. Diwan Hakim Rai was a nominee of Diwan Dina Nath and this was in itself sufficient to make Raja Dina Nath hostile.

During the second Anglo-Sikh War of 1848-49, his loyalty and patriotism once again shone itself. He along with his son Diwan Kishan Kishore, went over to Raja Sher Singh Attariwala and being an exceedingly able man lent a great strength to his cause. The document or ultimatum sent to the British Resident at Lahore detailing grievances felt by the Attariwala Sardar Sher Singh and his father Chattar Singh and the reason for their rising against the British dominant regime at Lahore was drawn by him. He surrendered to the British along with the Attariwala Sardars. After the annexation of the Punjab, Diwan Hakim Rai was considered too dangerous owing to his loyalty to the Sikh rule. So, he was removed as a prisoner to the fort of Chunar.

GENERAL HARSUKH RAI

During the reign of Maharaja Sher Singh, Harsukh Rai made the *Kardar* of Sheikhupura on a salary of Rs. 1800 per annum.⁹²¹ But soon he fell into disgrace with his patron, Wazir Dhian Singh Dogra whose influence was used to procure his dismissal in 1841. He made Sardar Jawahar Singh, the new *Wazir*, his enemy by his intrigues with Prince Peshora Singh as a result, he was not only dismissed but his *jagirs* and property were also confiscated. When Raja Lal Singh came into power, he again came into favour and he was made general of the newly created

⁹²⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 296.

⁹²¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 220.

brigade. He was also made the *Kardar* of Patti at the south western extremity of the Lahore district.⁹²² When Raja Lal Singh fell from power, Harsukh Rai's prestige fell from him. The new brigagde was broken up and he also lost the Kardarship of Patti.

Soon after the out break at Multan, in 1848, Harsukh Rai was again sent by the desire of Colonel H. Lawrence to the Majha as *Kardar* on Rs.4,310 per annum.⁹²³ He performed his duty faithfully throughout the troublesome days of 1848-49 and remain royal to the British Government.⁹²⁴ On the annexation of Punjab, his *jagir* worth Rs. 1,790 was maintained for life and he made a *Tehsildar*.

SHANKER NATH

Shanker Nath he was doing job in the Central Record Office, in which he continued after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was worked as a chief *Munshi* under Diwan Dina Nath. During the time of residency from 1846 to 1849, Shankar Nath was largely and confidentially employed by British officers, Messrs Bowring, Cocks, Wedderburn, and Major Mc'Gregor. They all have borne witness to the value of his services and to his high character. In 22 February 1847, Shankar Nath granted with the *jagir* of Rs. 2,000.⁹²⁵ In 1849, Shankar Nath held *jagirs* to the value of Rs. 6,500 besides cash allowances Rs. 1,360 and Rs. 2,412 for his establishment.⁹²⁶

DIWAN DEVI SAHAI

Devi Sahai was one of the important courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and after his master's death he continued his service. In 1846, he

⁹²² *Ibid.*

⁹²³ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 220.

⁹²⁴ *Foreign Department; Secret Consultation*, 27 January 1849; No. 10, N.A.I.

⁹²⁵ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 494.

⁹²⁶ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs: Historical and Biographical Notices of the Principal Families*, p. 254.

accompanied Raja Gulab Singh and Raja Dina Nath to Kasur, where the treaty which concluded the first Anglo-Sikh War was signed.⁹²⁷ In 1849, he joined Mulraj and presented through the seize of Multan. He fought the battle of Chillianwala. After annexation all his *jagirs*⁹²⁸ were confiscated but he was given a compensation allowance Rs. 240 per annum.

After going through the mutual relation of the Hindu Courtiers and Officials, after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, were not cordial and friendly. However, they are divided into groups, but their relations with the royal family and the successors of Ranjit Singh were friendly, smooth and cordial. They never cheated their masters; rather they remained sincere and loyal to the Lahore *Darbar* as well as the various successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh until they were forced by treacheries, intrigues and political circumstances. Maharaja Kharak Singh, Maharaja Sher Singh and Maharaja Nau Nihal Singh did trust them, assign them some duties and responsibilities to them to perform. In return to their trust, they came up to their expectation while doing their best to serve the cause of the Lahore *Darbar*. Dogra Brothers were against them and wanted their expulsion at Lahore *Darbar*. During the intrigues some of them lost their lives, jagirs and honours.

⁹²⁷ Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families Note in the Punjab*, p. 238.

⁹²⁸ Chak Ram Das in Bannu is one of the *Jagir* of Diwan Devi Sahai. *Lahore Political Dairies*, 1847-49, Vol. V, p. 139.

CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

From the foregoing account it becomes clear that the Hindus played a significant role in the politics of the Lahore *Darbar* right from the rise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh up to the annexation of the Punjab in 1849. Before going into a comprehensive study and analysis of the role and contribution of the various Hindu Courtiers and Officials in the *Darbar* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, it is imperative to have a general idea about the conditions prevailing in the Lahore *Darbar*. As we knew the court of Ranjit Singh was secular in character and the *Maharaja* was the central figure. As merit was the criterion for appointment, the persons belonging to different religions and races were appointed to high posts. His penetrating look read with great precision the underlying qualities of a man, and he did not care much about the fact that whether the one whom he had chosen was a *Sikh*, *Hindu* or *Muslim*. A single ordinary test was all that he required to form an estimate about the candidate's real worth. He was an absolute despot and nobody could interfere with what he desired to do. The persons he kept around him were generally men of the world, trained in the struggle of life, expert in getting ahead at the cost of others, designing and active in the fulfillment of their duties. No ruler of ancient or medieval Indian History could match Ranjit Singh who had appointed, to important posts, more than forty persons, hailing from more than a dozen foreign nationalities.

Ranjit Singh's courtiers did not form a homogeneous body. They represented various creeds, diverse races and different traditions. They comprised the *Dogras*, the *Muslims*, the *Europeans*, the *Sikhs*, and the *Hindus* and to this may be added the *Brahmins*. The *Brahmins* formed a

separate group as they considered themselves distinct from Hindus in general. This approach of the *Maharaja* clearly established that the nature and character of the Sikh state under him was secular.

The *Maharaja* inducted men belonging to different categories and creeds into his service, who later formed influential and powerful factions. But in so doing he inadvertently tilted the balance in favour of the Dogras which created trouble for the state after his death. Soon after the departure of the magnetic personality of the *Maharaja* these groups entered into internecine collisions and thus hastened the fall of the Sikh Kingdom. The main objective of these different and rival groups was to self-aggrandisement and accumulation wealth and power, while doing so the Dogras outclassed the rest. Most of its members felt actuated more by selfish motives than by patriotism, the jealousy and rivalry among the different families was bound to arise. During the life time of Ranjit Singh there could be seen no signs of open mutual jealousy and rivalry but after his death the conflicts between the various member of the court nobility became more violent to the utter detriment of the interests of the Lahore *Darbar*. Hence, the various factions were incapable of any agreement on political matters and required for their harmonious intercourse the supervision of a predominant mind. This was illustrated by the disgusting conduct of the *Darbar* soon after the death of the *Maharaja* in 1839.

But if such a heterogeneous court was detrimental to the interests of the state, it was in a way a source of strength to its ruler. It provided him with men of his own choice, who he himself had raised to eminence and who depended for their position, wealth and even life on his pleasure alone. Moreover, they could never forge a combined opposition to his will as there were natural differences among them and they had no vested

interests or hereditary prestige. In such circumstances, the motive of selfish gain in itself induced the ministers to work well and efficiently under an impulse of loyalty to their master. The motley crowd consisting of the officials of Ranjit Singh's central government secretaries, ministers and others, therefore, existed on the breath of the pleasure of the *Maharaja*. But on the whole the *Maharaja's* nobles were loyal to him.

There were broadly speaking a large number of Hindu Courtiers and Officials, who served the *Maharaja* and also his successor's regime. The Hindus were drawn from several groups like *Rajputs*, *Brahmins*, *Khatris*, *Ghorkhas* and *Purbias*. The Hindus who belonged to the caste of *Brahmins* and *Khatris* formed quite a large group. In the group of *Khatris*, there were Diwan Mohkam Chand, his son Moti Ram and grandsons Ram Dayal and Kirpa Ram, Diwan Bhawani Das and his brother Diwan Devi Das, Diwan Sawan Mal, and Diwan Karam Chand. In the group of *Brahmins* there were Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Diwan Ajodhia Prasad, Misr Diwan Chand, Misr Beli Ram and his brother Misr Rup Lal. They are appointed to high posts in civil and military department. They produced great warriors and administrators whose more or less exhaustive memories appeared in the historical records of the past. But there were also some other Hindu courtiers and officials who worked at Lahore *Darbar*, but no accounts about them have hitherto appeared. Their careers, roles, achievements, work, contribution and significance also had exceptional merits.

The Hindu Courtiers and Officials in the Court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were according positions of great eminent. They were integrated to the functioning of the *Darbar* and also to the functioning of the Sikh State. Their responsibilities and activities ranged from legislation, conquest, matters of revenue and administration. Full respect was

shown to the religion of the *Hindus* also and the people holding the highest jobs in his government, like the *Dogras* brothers, the *Misrs* and others strictly adhered to their Hindu forms of religion. The *Maharaja* entrusted the talented *Hindus* with Jobs involving very high responsibilities related with the State. Diwan Mohkam Chand amongst the most prominent courtier. Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath and Misr Beli Ram headed the revenue and finance departments of the State of Lahore. Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Ram Dyal and Diwan Ajodhia Prashad worked as top ranking military officers. Diwan Sawan Mal, Diwan Moti Ram, Misr Rup Lal and Diwan Kirpa Ram were some of his best Provincial Governors. They held in expending and consolidating in its efficient functioning. Without their participation Ranjit Singh would not have risen to the heights of supremacy in the Punjab.

It is notable that the Central Secretariat of Ranjit Singh's Kingdom was the centre of his empire. He allowed the *Hindus* virtually to monopolise appointments in the Central Secretariat because the upper classes of the Hindu community had acquired over the centuries a high degree of proficiency in revenue administration and general secretarial work. As compared with them, the other communities like the *Sikhs* and the *Muslims* were just novices. Therefore, the *Maharaja* who attached so much importance to merit, had preference to recruit the majority of personnel for his central offices from the single community of the *Hindus*. The efficiency with which it was run by highly trained and accomplished *Hindus* like Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Misr Beli Ram etc. is an example in itself who worked in the finance department of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Diwan Bhawani Das organized twelve departments or *Daftars* of the State connected with

finance. He brought about a sort of specialisation in civil and military accounts and organised every department. He had full authority over the accounts of *Kardars* and other sources of income. He was not honest enough to be impartial towards his own brethren and relatives. However dark he may be painted, it is true that he was an able man and ability was the only test with Ranjit Singh in the selection of his servants. Some of the major *Daftars* of the Central Secretariat like *Daftar-i-Abwab-ul-Mal*, *Daftar-i-Abwab-ul-Tahwil*, *Tazuihat*, *Roznamacha* and *Toshakhana* etc. were not only highly organized but were also thoroughly professional in their functioning. On the whole the balance of the secretariat was heavily tilted in favour of one community. Misr Beli Ram worked as a *Toshakhania* or treasurer under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The *Maharaja* places great confidence in him.

The third chapter attempts to analyze the role of Hindu Courtiers and Officials in the financial administration. Ranjit Singh's Sikh empire had well developed and efficient system of financial management. The expenditure and revenue were managed according to well-defined systems. The functioning of finance departments was very well regulated. This was owing to the fact that the sources of income and revenue were systematically explored. The collection of revenue and the regularization of expenditure were carried out by the most experienced financial administrators like Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Dina Nath, Diwan Ganga Ram and helped them by Provincial Governors like Diwan Sawan Mal and Misr Rup Lal. Diwan Bhawani Das's contribution and services at Lahore *Darbar* were uncountable, remarkable and unforgettable. The whole financial system was organized by this intelligent and experienced Hindu. Diwan Ganga Ram were also among the most important courtier. He was an experienced and talented person and due to this reason he

served the Lahore *Darbar* to the best of his abilities. He became the head of the Military office and keeper of the royal seal. Diwan Ganga Ram simplified the system of keeping records. He organised the *Abkari* (excise) system. After the death of Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Dina Nath became head of Finance Department of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Hence, during the reign of Ranjit Singh, we find that the revenue and secretariat departments were entrusted to *Hindus* who had always served in this capacity even in the Muslim court of Delhi and Kabul. In civil administration, Ranjit Singh gave preference to *Hindus*.

In the next chapter analyze Hindu Courtiers and Official's role as military Commanders and Generals, their rank, status and position; their military services, their participation in various campaign and contribution made in the battlefields. As stated earlier in the main text of this thesis *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh in particular and a few of his successors in general simply liked them and depended on them for their conquests and also their proficient administration in the conquered areas. They also assigned them various tasks of responsibilities in the field of civil, judicial, economic and revenue administration as well. *Maharaja's* relations with them were never unfriendly. He took them into confidence especially in matters of planning military campaigns, setting up boundaries, revenue and finance policies etc. It is quiet important to note that many of the Generals did not have a military background and performed dual roles as administrators and Generals. His earlier conquests were undertaken, when Ranjit Singh was consolidating his power, with the help of these Courtiers. His conquests in *Malwa* region, Jalandhar, Multan and Kashmir in particular and also those of Attock, Mankera, Hazara were the direct result of their hard work, boldness, courage, passions and farsightedness of these Hindu Generals.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh at his disposal some of the most distinguished Generals like Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Ram Dayal and Diwan Bhawani Das and Diwan Ajodhia Prashad.

Diwan Mohkam Chand was a shrewd general of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He had a sound knowledge of Military tactics and strategy. It was because of their experience under different rulers that these Hindu Courtiers and Officials played a very important role in the establishment of the Sikh Kingdom. He had not seen a defeat; he was an ever victorious general. He was equally talented in conducting civil administrative affairs. From 1806 to 1814 he remained with almost all the military campaigns of the *Maharaja* as the chief military advisor and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Diwan Mohkam Chand led some very important conquests like *Malwa* region in 1806 and 1807, Kangra in 1809, Jalandhar in 1811, Kashmir in 1812, Attock in 1813 etc. Mohkam Chand was one of the ablest Generals of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was the most loyal, devoted and trustworthy subordinates. He was one of the architects of the Sikh Empire who rose by dint of merit to the post of *Diwan* and virtually the commander-in-chief of the Sikh forces.

Following him other Hindu General Misr Diwan Chand who was hardworking, courageous and brave general of *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh. He extended the borders of his empire far and wide by conquering Multan in 1818, Kashmir in 1819, and Mankera in 1821. He proved to be a very sincere throughout his life and played a very important role in the growth, development and consolidation of the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. No doubt his military activities can not be questioned but he was not a good administrator. Misr Diwan Chand had the support of Dogras, one of the most important figures at Lahore *Darbar*, because he introduced the Dogras to the *Maharaja*. Above all he

was an excellent soldier and military commander with a professional skill of a high degree.

Diwan Ram Dayal perform highly significant roles in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He held in expanding and consolidating in its efficient functioning by participating as a divisional commander in the expeditions of Kashmir in 1814 and 1819, Multan in 1818 and Hazara in 1820. However, one unfortunate event shadowed in his career which was the death of his son, Ram Dayal in 1820 who was also a brave commander. Without their participation Ranjit Singh would not have risen to the heights of supremacy in the Punjab.

Diwan Bhawani Das, who though professionally a civil administrator had all the genius for military activities. He took part in the siege of Jammu in 1809, Attock in 1813 and Kashmir in 1814 and 1819. Thus he was a man of great ability. Diwan Ajodhia Prashad was worked as pay master of *Fauji-Khas*. His relations with *Europeans* especially with Ventura and Allard, were on excellent terms. He was very popular with the Sikh soldiery especially after the demise of the *Maharaja*. He was from all accounts eminently successful performing all kinds of duties : administrative judicial, military and diplomatic. The Hindu Generals after making the conquests were made the Governors of the conquered territories and most of the cases governed their territories most efficiently.

Their role as provincial Governors is also significant. As pointed out, most of the Generals of Ranjit Singh performed the dual task of military expansion and administration. They not only conquered these areas, rather, when they were appointed Governors of the conquered territories maintained peace, law and order in those regions like Diwan Mohkam Chand. Besides them Ranjit Singh had some of the best Hindu

provincial administrators like Diwan Sawan Mal, Misr Rup Lal, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Kirpa Ram etc. under him. They won over the hearts of the inhabitants of these areas because of the treatment they meted out to them, particularly in the field of revenue and justice. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's whole administrative machinery (revenue and finance) fully depended on Hindus. There was an elaborate system of territorial division in place which helped in making civil administration regulated and organized. The territories were divided into *Pargnas*, *Subas*, *Talluqas* and villages. These were placed under various administrative officers like *Kardars* and *Nazims*. The Hindu Civil administrators under Ranjit Singh proved to be capable and wise. The most important civil administrators like Diwan Sawan Mal and Misr Rup Lal also introduced innovative administrative reforms.

Diwan Moti Ram son of Diwan Mokham Chand served the Lahore *Darbar* in civil as well as military capacity. But his work in the civil administration is highly notable. Diwan Moti Ram as a Governor of Jalandhar and Kashmir introduced many reforms for the welfare of the people.

Diwan Sawan Mal's contribution in the provincial administration is remarkable. As a Governor he displayed a tremendous capacity for hard work and effected great improvements during a long reign. Diwan Sawan Mal is stated in every account to have been efficient and progressive who he did great work in the judicial field. During his administration a number of masonry wells for irrigation were sunk. He caused canals to be dug round Multan and gave an impetus to commerce and industry. He promoted colonization by giving people land and protection. Thereby he converted a desert into a cultivated region. His revenue reforms were based on the principles of low taxes, moderate assessment and reduction

in extra charges imposed on the cultivations. The prosperity brought about by such efforts of Diwan Sawan Mal attracted the notice of some contemporary British officials and travellers who happened to pass a number of times through the Governorship of Diwan Sawan Mal. Though, during the quarrel between Sawan Mal and the Dogras, Maharaja Ranjit Singh always favoured the Dogras but Sawan Mal never became a rebel and he was always royal to the *Maharaja*. He never misused his power. The time of Diwan Sawan Mal is still regarded by the people with esteem. Every segment of the population gained from his administration whether it was the Hindu, the Muslim peasants or the Pathans. Some people say that he had prejudices against the Mohammedans. It is most probably untrue. He was just and did his best to give good rule to the people. He deserves to be called one of the greatest Governors. He could wield pen and sword equally well and it was a matter of great credit to him.

Misr Rup Lal was also recognized the among best Governors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He proved himself not only an excellent administrator but a great reformer as well. He was upright just and beyond corruption.

Diwan Kirpa Ram performed multifarious duties as a *Nazim*, a *Diwan*, a soldier and an administrator but he was well known as a Governor. However, amongst the Sikh Governors, Diwan Kirpa Ram enjoyed the best reputation. Intelligent and having unique ideas of magnificence, he beautified Srinagar with many fine buildings. His time of viceroyalty is compared by the people of the valley to those pleasant days when Jahangir used to make an annual visit.

No doubt they were given special privileges and perks. Their contribution and service especially in the military and civil

administration were worth a lot, their presence and role in day to day activities and the impact they left in various walks of life, such as political, military, social, cultural, judicial etc. was not only great but ever lasting.

No doubt they were give special privileges and perks. Their contribution and service especially in the military and civil administration were worth a lot, their presence and role in day to day activities and the impact they left in various walks of life, such as political, military, social, cultural, judicial etc. was not only great but ever lasting. Indeed their presence helped the *Maharaja* and his successors in keeping the indigenous elements under effective control.

Intrigues have always been inextricably linked with politics. In a desire of greater power and influence courtiers often indulge in conspiracies and intrigues. Here, it is worth mentioning that after the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the role of Hindu Courtiers and Officials in intrigues and treacheries at the Lahore *Darbar* was crucial and significant. They decidedly assisted in improving the civil administration as well as military. Being men of varied talents and tastes they were interested in duties of various natures. We have seen how efficiently they performed their duties and to what extent they proved helpful/useful to the Lahore *Darbar* during the life time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and also in the times of his successors. Throughout their presence at the Lahore *Darbar* they remained relevant either because of their relations with the British, with other nobles and even sometimes with the common people. The Hindu Courtiers and Officials of Ranjit Singh's *Darbar* were also sometimes constrained to indulge in intrigues and conspiracies.

Amongst the court nobility of the Sikh *Darbar* Diwan Dina Nath was unique. He was infact an accomplished person, courteous and considerate, well educated, though nothing of a scholar. Dina Nath soon distinguished himself, but it was not till the later days of the *Maharaja* that he came to be regarded as a prominent figure. He was an expert in statistics and financial information regarding the Punjab. Though, basically he was interested in civil administration yet he performed many jobs in military activities as desired by the *Maharaja* and his successors. He also came up to their expectations. The secret of Diwan Dina Nath's success lay in the fact that he studied closely every changing political situation of his country like a true diplomat or rather an opportunist and availed himself accordingly. He had no scruples and no convictions. His opportunism, however was of a different kind. He was a man who had to work against unscrupulous and ambitious leaders. Thus it was natural for him to set his own welfare above abstract principles. But to secure this he never betrayed the cause of his masters. On the other hand, he laboured hard for the good of the state. Among the Sikh barnos who stood around the throne of the young Maharaja Dalip Singh, there was not one who honestly laboured for his country or who would have made the smallest sacrifice to save it. If Dina Nath was not more honest than his contemporaries he was at least more patriotic. Without his clear head and business like habits it would have been almost impossible to disentangle the *Darbar* accounts during the time of Regency. He was respected for his financial ability, his moderation and reserve. Diwan Dina Nath was bold, morally courageous and free from the vices of the time. It was his position and his intimate knowledge of the financial affairs that rendered Diwan Dina Nath indispensable to the early British administrators for sometime after the annexation of Punjab in 1849.

Misr family was also prominent, Misr Beli Ram being its most important representative at the Court. He was one of the most trustworthy courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and worked as a *Thoshakhania* during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and after his demise. His master never doubted his ability, work and contribution at Lahore. He had served with dedication never betrayed his master. Misr Beli Ram was a man of great intelligence and the *Maharaja* was fully aware of his worth.

As Hindu Courtiers and Officials enjoyed greater prestige and prominence in Ranjit Singh's court, they were often victims of jealousy. This made them easy targets of other factions like those of *Sardars* and *Dogras*. A couple of Hindu courtiers like Misr Beli Ram and Misr Ram Kishan even lost their lives due to intrigues. A few others like Misr Rup Lal either lost their jobs or fell out of the favour of the *Maharaja* and Kirpa Ram were to retire to places like Banaras. Diwan Mohkam Chand's family for three generations had rendered good and brilliant service for the *Maharaja* but this did not save them from the ingratitude of their Master. Diwan Mohkam Chand, the eldest member of the Diwan family, was the best and most successful general and it was in great measure owing to his military ability that the *Maharaja* established himself as the sole ruler of the Punjab. But this did not save his son Moti Ram or his grand son Kirpa Ram from constant slights, fines, confiscations and eventual ruin. An important evidence of the loyalty of the Hindu Courtiers and Officials can be found in the fact that like many others they did not shift loyalties during the Anglo-Sikh wars.

Infact, by dint of hard work, their caliber, sincerity, loyalty, their military services, their participation in various campaigns and the contribution which they made in the battlefield and their contribution in

improving the civil administration they won over the hearts of everyone at the Lahore *Darbar*. The evolution of the Lahore *Darbar's* Central Secretariat under these officials was of great value and result oriented. Thus the character and nature of the financial system got new orientation and proved to be of great utility to the Sikh State. The role played by these *Hindus* in directing campaigns at Malwa region, Kangra, Jalandhar, Multan, Kashmir, Attock, Mankera were most significant and unforgettable. Some of them along with the military services, rendered notable services in the civil administration of the state also. Particularly the services of Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misr Diwan Chand and many others in the service of civil administration were of high quality. Similarly some of those who performed their duties in the civil administration also directed the campaigns in the military field. Particularly the contribution Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Dina Nath, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Kirpa Ram and many others is notable. It was the result of their commitment, discipline, way of life and loyalty towards the Lahore *Darbar* that the *Darbar* was noted for its greatness.

Their relation with the nobility carried importance because these relations continued to have a deep impact even after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Let it be noted that the other factions of the nobility at Lahore *Darbar* were not less important; these factions were given due place, status, position, duties, responsibilities, privileges and perks sometimes, even more than those of the Hindu Courtiers and Officials. It was chiefly due to their having similar qualities and merits which the *Hindus* were having that they were jealous of these *Hindus* as the latter enjoyed extraordinary confidence of their ruler.

Lastly, after the death of Maharaja Ranit Singh the *Hindus* who remained loyal to the Lahore *Darbar* began to take active part in political conspiracies and started indulging in treacheries and intrigues along

with *Sardars* against the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the *Dogras*. Their relations with the British remained fluctuating according to the changing political circumstances. Most of the time relations with the British were dictated by the relations between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the British. Thus, Maharaja Ranjit Singh succeeded, when he enlisted them in the service of Lahore *Darbar* running the military and civil administration efficiently.

To conclude, Diwan Devi Das, Misr Basti Ram, Bakshi Bhagat Ram, Rattan Chand Duggal, Rattan Chand Darhiwala, Diwan Karam Chand, Misr Megh Raj, Misr Ram Kishan, Misr Sukhraj, Diwan Shankar Nath, Misr Rallia Ram, Misr Sahib Dayal, Rai Kishan Chand, Diwan Hakam Rai, General Harsukh Rai, Diwan Devi Sahai, Misr Jassa Mal and many more Hindu Courtiers and Officials served the Lahore *Darbar* during the life time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and even after his demise. They worked according to the needs of the *Maharaja* and as per the expectations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lahore *Darbar* as well as the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They were always active and absorbed in performing their duties and responsibilities till 1849.

APPENDIX-I

LIST OF THE HINDU COURTIER AND OFFICIALS IN THE LAHORE DARBAR

Sr. No.	Name	Sub-Caste	Position
1.	Ajodhia Das		Adalati
2.	Ajodhia Parshad (son of Rallia Ram)	Brahmin	Worked under his father
3.	Ajodhia Parshad, Diwan (son of Diwan Ganga Ram)	Brahmin	Paymaster
4.	Amarnath, Diwan (son of Diwan Dina Nath)	Brahmin	Paymaster
5.	Amir Chand	Brahmin (Kaul)	Commandant
6.	Amir Chand, Misr	Brahmin	Nazim
7.	Amir Chand, Misr	Brahmin	Treasurer
8.	Anokh Rai		Vakil
9.	Arjan Das		Commandant
10.	Bahadur Chand		Adalati
11.	Bahlu Ram, Pandit	Brahmin	Court Pandit
12.	Basti Ram, Misr	Brahmin	Toshakhania
13.	Beli Ram, Misr	Brahmin	Chief Toshakhania
14.	Bhagat Ram, Bakshi		Bakshi
15.	Bhawani Das, Diwan	Khatri	Finance Minister
16.	Bishan Das		Nazim
17.	Brij Lal, Pandit (father of Pandit Madusudhan)	Brahmin	Court Pandit
18.	Chunni Lal, Diwan	Brahmin	Nazim

19.	Dalpat Rai, Pandit	Brahmin	Court Pandit
20.	Dault Rai, Diwan (son of Diwan Lakhi Mal)	Khatri	Kardar
21.	Daya Ram, Pandit	Brahmin	Kardar
22.	Devi Das, Diwan	Khatri	Keeper of Royal Seal
23.	Devi Dayal (son of Gurmukh Rai)	Khatri (Chopra)	Vakil
24.	Devi Sahai, Diwan (son of Radha Kishan, Diwan)		Commandant
25.	Dewani Mal	Khatri	Trusted confident
26.	Dhannu, Diwan		Commandant
27.	Dhanpat Rai, Diwan	Brahmin	Kardar
28.	Dhunraj	Khatri	Colonel
29.	Din Das, Diwan		Commandant
30.	Dina Nath, Diwan (Raja)	Brahmin	Finance Minister
31.	Dip Chand		Commandant
32.	Ditta Mal	Khatri	Kardar
33.	Diwan Chand, Misr	Brahmin	Commander-in-chief
34.	Duni Chand		Commandant
35.	Ganga Bishan	Khatri	Nazim
36.	Ganga Ram, Diwan	Brahmin	Paymaster Chief
37.	Gangu Mal		Commandant
38.	Ganpat Rai	Khatri	Kardar
39.	Gobind Jass, Rai	Khatri	Vakil
40.	Gobind Sahai	Khatri	Vakil
41.	Gulzari Mal	Khatri	Commandant

42.	Gurmukh Rai (brother of Diwan Sawan Mal)	Khatri (Chopra)	Officer of Irregular cavalry
43.	Gyan Chand (son of Rallia Ram)	Brahmin	Head of the officer of salt revenue
44.	Hakim Rai, Diwan	Khatri	Nazim
45.	Hakim Rai, Lala		Physician
46.	Har Kishan, Pandit	Brahmin	Commandant
47.	Harcharan Das (son of Rallia Ram)	Brahmin	Assistant at custom Department
48.	Harcharan Das	Brahmin	Commandant
49.	Harcharan Das, Misr		Adalati
50.	Hari Ram (father of Shankar Nath)		Munshi
51.	Harsukh Rai	Khatri (Kapur)	General
52.	Haryar	Brahmin	Commandant
53.	Hukam Chand, Diwan (son of Diwan Bhawani Das)	Khatri	Daftari, Kardar
54.	Jalla, Pandit	Brahmin	Tutor and Chief Adviser of Hira Singh
55.	Jamait Rai		Munshi
56.	Jamna Das		Commandant
57.	Jassa Mal, Misr	Brahmin	Thoshakhania
58.	Jawahar		Qanungo
59.	Jawahar Lal, Lala		Munshi
60.	Jawahar Mal, Diwan		Farmer/Ijaradar
61.	Jawala Sahai	Khatri (Nanda)	Revenue Officer

62.	Jawaya Ram		Collector of Duties
63.	Jetha Mal, Diwan		Nazim
64.	Jiwan Mal		Commandant
65.	Jodha Ram, Misr, Diwan Brahmin (father-in-law of Pandit Jalla)		Commandant
66.	Kahan Chand		Munshi
67.	Kahan Chand	Brahmin	Commandant
68.	Kanhiya Lal (father of Rattan Chand Duggal)	Khatri	Kardar
69.	Karam Chand, Lala		Munshi
70.	Karam Narayin (son of Diwan Sawan Mal)	Khatri (Chopra)	Kardar
71.	Khazana Mal	Khatri	Commandant
72.	Kirpa Ram, Diwan	Khatri (Kochhar)	Nazim
73.	Kishan Chand		Commandant
74.	Kishan Chand, Rai	Khatri (Bhandari)	Vakil
75.	Kishan Dyal, Diwan		Vakil
76.	Lachhmi		Munshi
77.	Lakhi Mal, Diwan	Khatri	Kardar
78.	Lal Chand		Vakil
79.	Lal Kaul, Pandit	Brahmin	Commandant
80.	Madusudhan, Pandit	Brahmin	Incharge of Dharmarth
81.	Mangal Sen (son of Lala Karam Chand)	Brahmin	Commandant
82.	Mathra Das		Commandant

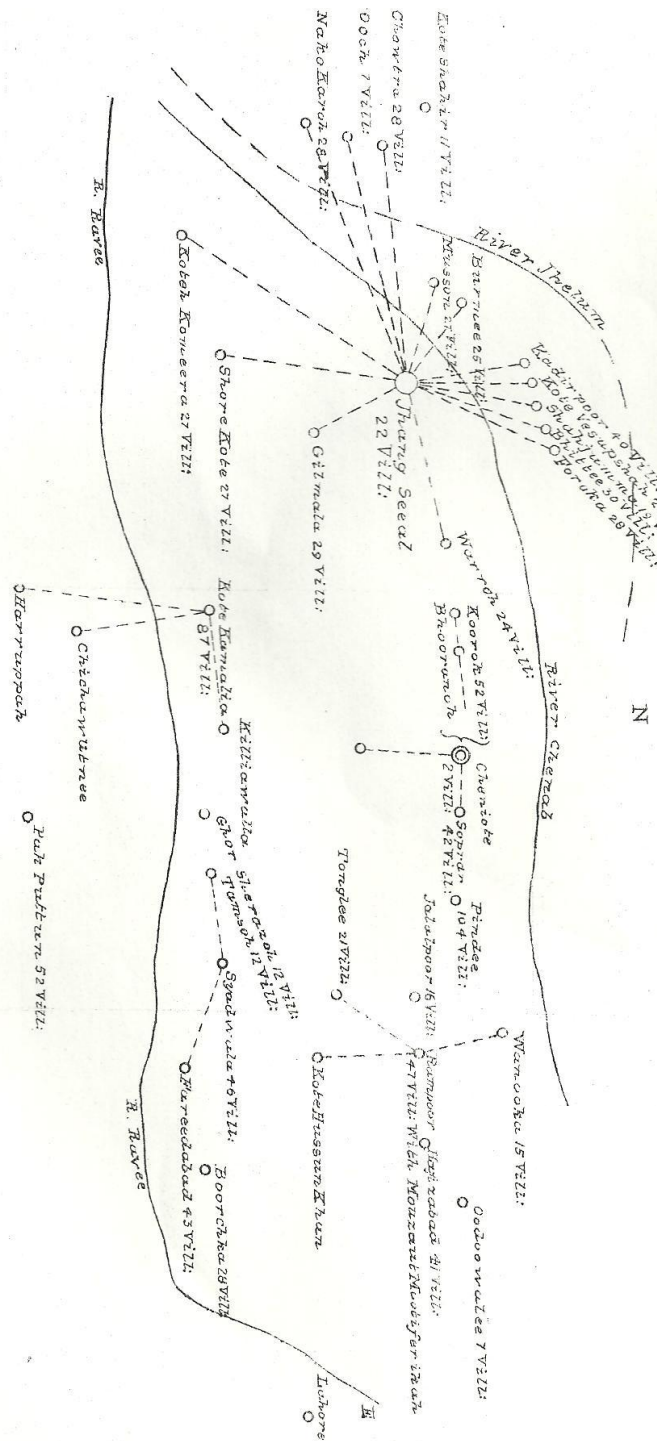
83.	Maya Das		Kardar
84.	Megh Raj, Misr	Brahmin	Toshakhania
85.	Mirza Mal	Khatri	Commandant
86.	Mohan Lal Suri		Vakil
87.	Mohkam Chand, Diwan	Khatri (Kochhar)	Nazim
88.	Moti Ram, Diwan	Khatri (Kochhar)	General
89.	Mukand Chand	Brahmin (Kapur)	Commandant
90.	Mullraj, Diwan (Dilwalia)	Brahmin	Nazim
91.	Mulraj, Diwan (son of Diwan Sawan Mal)	Khatri (Chopra)	Nazim
92.	Nanak Chand (brother of Diwan Sawan Mal)	Khatri (Chopra)	Revenue Collector, Munshi
93.	Nand Gopal (brother of Rattan Chand Duggal)	Khatri	Munshi
94.	Narain Das	Brahmin	Revenue Collector
95.	Narain Das, Lala (Brother of Bhawani Das)	Khatri	Kardar
96.	Piara Mal		Kardar
97.	Radha Kishan (son of Pandit Madusudhan)	Brahmin	Tutor of Maharaja Dalip Singh
98.	Radha Kishan, Diwan		Commandant
99.	Rai Anand Singh	Khatri (Bhandari)	Vakil
100.	Raj Kaur (brother of Bhawani Das)	Khatri	Kardar
101.	Raj Narain	Khatri	Commandant
102.	Raj Rup, Lala		Nazim

103.	Raja Ram, Misr		Revenue Collector
104.	Rallia Ram, Misr	Brahmin	Kardar, Chief of Custom
105.	Ram Chand (grandson of Nanak Chand)	Khatri (Chopra)	Incharge of Private/ Royal Seal
106.	Ram Chand		Kardar
107.	Ram Das, Lala		Munshi
108.	Ram Dayal		Munshi
109.	Ram Dayal Bhandari (brother of Rai Kishan Chand)	Khatri (Bhandari)	Vakil
110.	Ram Dayal, Diwan	Khatri (Kochhar)	Commandant
111.	Ram Dayal, Lala	Khatri, Bhandari	Vakil
112.	Ram Kishan, Misr	Brahmin	Chamberlain (Deorhidar)
113.	Rama Nand		Revenue Administrator
114.	Rang Ram	Khatri (Kapur)	Commandant
115.	Ranpat Rai	Brahmin	Revenue Collector
116.	Rattan Chand		Kardar
117.	Rattan Chand Darhiwala		Incharge Postal
118.	Rattan Chand Duggal	Khatri	Munshi
119.	Rup Chand		Vakil
120.	Rup Lal, Misr	Brahmin	Nazim
121.	Sahib Dayal, Misr (Son of Rallia Ram)	Brahmin	Munshi
122.	Sarab Dayal		Munshi
123.	Sardha Ram		Munshi
124.	Sawan Mal, Diwan	Khatri (Chopra)	Nazim

125.	Sawan Mal, Misr (son of Misr Rup Lal)	Brahmin	Risaldar (Cavalry)
126.	Sehaj Ram, Lala		Kardar
127.	Sen Mal	Khatri	Commandant
128.	Seva Ram, Lala		Kardar
129.	Shah Ram		Munshi
130.	Shambhu Mal	Khatri	Commandant
131.	Shankar Das (son of Shiv Dayal Duggal)	Khatri	Financial Administrator
132.	Shankar Nath (son of Rallia Ram)	Brahmin	Worked in Amritsar mint
133.	Shankar Nath, Diwan		Munshi
134.	Sheo Parshad		Worked in Topkhana
135.	Shiam Das		Adalati
136.	Shiv Dayal Duggal	Khatri	Kardar
137.	Shiv Dyal, Lala (son of Diwan Moti Ram)	Khatri (Kochhar)	Nazim
138.	Sital Chand		Munshi
139.	Sohan Lal Suri, Lala		Report Writer
140.	Sujan Rai		Munshi
141.	Sukh Dayal, Misr	Brahmin	Commandant
142.	Sukhdayal	Khatri	Nazim
143.	Sukhraj, Misr	Brahmin	Commandant
144.	Sunder Das		Commandant
145.	Sunder Das (Son of Misr Ram Kishan), Misr	Brahmin	Keeper of Privy purse/ Royal Seal

146.	Tara Chand, Diwan	Brahmin	General
147.	Tara Chand, Diwan (Son of Lala Karam Chand)	Brahmin	Kardar
148.	Tarlok Chand, Pandit	Brahmin (Gaur)	General
149.	Tek Chand		Nazim
150.	Thakar Das (son of Misr Beli Ram)	Brahmin	Treasurer
151.	Thakur Das Duggal (son of Kanhiya Lal Duggal)	Khatri	Kardar
152.	Tulsidhar		Nazim

APPENDIX-II **A SKETCH MAP OF MISR RALLIA RAM'S ILAKA**



SELECTED GLOSSARY

<i>Abwab</i>	: Cesses paid by the cultivators
<i>Adalti</i>	: Judicial Officer
<i>Ain</i>	: Law
<i>Akal Sahai</i>	: 'May God help'. This expression was used by Ranjit Singh on his coins and official communications
<i>Akali</i>	: A member of the Akali or Nihang, order of the Sikhs, literally meaning an immortal
<i>Akhbar</i>	: A newspaper or a dispatch of news
<i>Amir</i>	: A title denoting a Muslim of High rank
<i>Amil</i>	: A revenue collector
<i>Azan</i>	: Muslim call for prayer
<i>Bahadur</i>	: Brave, also a title of distinction
<i>Bakhshi</i>	: A paymaster of troops
<i>Banjar</i>	: The Barren or waste land
<i>Bar</i>	: The upland wastelands between the two river valleys
<i>Batai</i>	: Division of land produce between the State and the cultivator
<i>Begar</i>	: A cess in lieu of unpaid labour or forced
<i>Bhai</i>	: Literally a 'brother' and a title of sanctity and respectability among the Sikhs
<i>Bhangi</i>	: Addicted to taking bhang or hemp-an intoxicant, also the name of a Sikh Misal
<i>Bigha</i>	: A measure of land equal to 4 <i>kanals</i> and in certain areas equal to 2 <i>kanals</i> . Its size varies from region to region.

<i>Chak</i>	: A village
<i>Chakdar</i>	: The owner of a <i>chak</i> or well, as opposed to the land attached to the well, acquiring certain rights over the produce of the land irrigated from his well
<i>Chaudhari</i>	: The chief person of the village, usually rich and distinguished for his sense of justice
<i>Daftar</i>	: A register or a book, office
<i>Daftari</i>	: A record keeper
<i>Daftar-i-Mulla</i>	: The central office of royal Secretariat
<i>Darbar</i>	: A court; an audience hall presided over by the king or the premier or a person of note
<i>Darogha</i>	: A superintendent head of any organisation
<i>Dar-ul-Aman</i>	: The adobe of peace
<i>Deohari</i>	: An entrance to a house or building
<i>Derah</i>	: The camp
<i>Dharamarth</i>	: Charity or for charitable purposes.
<i>Diwan</i>	: The head of the finance department also a minister, a steward
<i>Doaba (doab)</i>	: A territory lying between two rivers and in the Punjab particularly the one between the rivers Satluj and Beas
<i>Dogra</i>	: An inhabitant of 'Duggar Desh' situated in the lower hills in Jammu, generally of Rajput origin
<i>Doshala</i>	: A double shawl
<i>Dussehra</i>	: An Indian festival celebrated in commemoration of the victory of Lord Rama over the forces of Ravana, by burning the effigy of the latter. It generally falls in October.

<i>Fakir</i>	: A mendicant : a religious-minded person devoted to meditation
<i>Farangi</i>	: An European
<i>Farman</i>	: Royal command
<i>Fateh Jang</i>	: Victor of battles
<i>Fateh Nasib</i>	: of victorious destiny
<i>Fateh-o-Nusrat</i>	: Destined victor
<i>Nasib</i>	
<i>Fauj-i-khas</i>	: Special royal cops. Here it refers to French Brigade
<i>Ghazi</i>	: A Muhammadan crusader
<i>Ghorcharhas</i>	: Literally horse-riders, cavalymen who formed the bulk of the irregular divisions in the Sikh army
<i>Harhi (Rabi)</i>	: Summer harvest
<i>Howdah</i>	: A litter; seat on an elephant
<i>Hukka</i>	: An Indian pipe and its apparatus by which tobacco is smoked through water
<i>Hundi</i>	: Payment draft
<i>Ijara</i>	: It was an arrangement in which a source of income was placed in the charge of a person in return for a fixed amount to be paid to the state
<i>Ijaradar</i>	: One who holds the <i>ijara</i> or the farmer or the contractor who is entrusted with the responsibility of collecting the revenue of a particular area of land or the local taxes in return for the payment of a stipulated sum to the Government
<i>Ilqa</i>	: A territory, an estimate, jurisdiction

<i>Jagir</i>	: A field : land given by Government as a reward for services or as a fee
<i>Jagirdar</i>	: The holder of a <i>jagir</i>
<i>Jama</i>	: The aggregate of revenue assessed
<i>Jawar</i>	: The maize
<i>Jehad</i>	: A crusade, a holy war
<i>Jinsi</i>	: Mixed
<i>Jurmana</i>	: Fine, penalty
<i>Kankut</i>	: A method of assessment based on the appraisal of the standing crops
<i>Kanwar</i>	: A prince; generally denoting princes other than the heir-apparent
<i>Kardar</i>	: An officer in charge of the revenue and local administration of a <i>pargana</i> or <i>talluqa</i>
<i>Khalsa</i>	: The land held or administered directly by government or the sovereign; the brother-hood of the Sikhs, particularly those conforming to the instructions of Guru Gobind Singh
<i>Khanqah</i>	: A monastery
<i>Kharwar</i>	: Literally an ass load signifying a measure of weight as well as of land in Kashmir
<i>Khatri</i>	: A member of the fighting caste of the Hindu community according to the traditional duties enjoined upon the four castes; the word is a corruption of Sanskrit 'kshatriya'
<i>Khazana-i-Amra</i>	: Main treasury
<i>Khidmatgar</i>	: An attendant; a servant
<i>Khillat</i>	: A robe of honour generally conferred by princes on persons of rank or distinguished

<i>Kiladar</i>	: Garrison – master
<i>Kumedan</i>	: From commandant (in French)
<i>Madad-i-ma'ash</i>	: Aid for subsistence
<i>Maharaja</i>	: The great king, the king of kings, a ruler and a sovereign prince
<i>Mai</i>	: Mother : a respectable address to a woman
<i>Majha</i>	: Literally the middle country, usually referring to the territory of Lahore and Amritsar districts of Punjab.
<i>Malba</i>	: The public fund in a village for common village expenses covering payments of various kinds including perquisites of officials but not the land revenue; also one of the habubat paid by the tenant to the proprietor
<i>Malik-i-adna</i>	: Literally, inferior proprietor, like Chakdar
<i>Malik-i-ala</i>	: Literally a superior proprietor; he had a recognized right over land and claim to certain share in the produce, usually ranging from 1.5 to 10 percent
<i>Malwa</i>	: Land of the Malwaeis or Malois
<i>Maund</i>	: A unit of weight consisting of 40 <i>sers</i> .
<i>Mauza</i>	: A village, an estate
<i>Misal</i>	: A Sikh confederacy, also used for the territory or troops of a Sikh Sardar; a file
<i>Misaldar</i>	: Belonging to a Sikh Misal; holder of a portion of the Misal
<i>Misr</i>	: A name or a title given to Brahmins
<i>Moharana</i>	: A cess charged for affixing the government seal

<i>Mukhtar-i-Kar</i>	: An agent or a deputy
<i>Mukhtiar</i>	: An agent, an accredited representative
<i>Mulahiza shud</i>	: Examined or verified, inspected
<i>Mumtaz-ud-Daulah</i>	: Eminent in the State
<i>Munshi</i>	: A writer, a scribe, secretary, interpreter or language-master; also title of respect for a literary
<i>Muqadam</i>	: A village headman
<i>Mutsaddi</i>	: An accountant, a clerk
<i>Muwajib</i>	: Salaries, rewards or wages
<i>Nanakshahi (sikka)</i>	: A Sikh rupee coin, a coin current in the Sikh times of the value of sixteen annas
<i>Nazar</i>	: An offering to a superior or a holy person
<i>Nazarana</i>	: A tribute from a tributary or a dependant on regular basis or on special occasions
<i>Nazim</i>	: The governor of a province
<i>Panch</i>	: Elected representative of the people
<i>Panchayat</i>	: A village court of arbitration consisting of five or more members. It was the lowest rung in the hierarchy of judicial administration, here used for the executive council of a Sikh regiment elected by troops
<i>Pandit</i>	: A learned Brahmin. Literary a wise or learned man
<i>Pargna</i>	: A tract of country consisting of generally fifty to hundred villages
<i>Pashmina</i>	: A kind of fine wool; woolen goods
<i>Patta</i>	: A deed of lease, a document given to the revenue

	payer
<i>Patti</i>	: A part or a portion of a village, generally being the sub division of a taraf; a share in a village
<i>Patwari</i>	: A village accountant, a revenue official
<i>Pir</i>	: A spiritual guide among the Muslims
<i>Qanungo</i>	: A hereditary keeper of the revenue records at the Pargna or the talluqa level
<i>Rabi</i>	: The spring crop generally sown in October-November and reaped in April-May
<i>Rai</i>	: A title of respect bestowed by Sikh ruler of many of their dignitaries; a Hindu Chief
<i>Raja</i>	: A king, a prince a title of high rank
<i>Raja-i-Rajgan</i>	: A ruler of rulers, a title
<i>Sabt-i-Sarishta-i-</i>	: Registered in the privy office
<i>Hazur shud</i>	
<i>Sahukar</i>	: A banker, a money-lender
<i>Sa'ir</i>	: Custom duties or taxes other than the land revenue
<i>Samat</i>	: An era, Bikrami
<i>Sanad</i>	: Royal ordinance, a deed or grant from a competent authority
<i>Sarai</i>	: A resting place for travellers
<i>Sardar</i>	: A chief, a commander, a form of address for all respectable Sikhs and Afghan chiefs
<i>Sarkar</i>	: Government, king's court; a title by which Maharaja Ranjit Singh was popularly addressed by his people
<i>Saropa</i>	: A dress from head to foot, a dress of honour

<i>Sati</i>	: A wife who burns herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband
<i>Sauni (kharif)</i>	: Autumn harvest
<i>Shaikh</i>	: The head of a Muslim religious brotherhood or fraternity
<i>Shukrana</i>	: A present of thanks-giving
<i>Sikh</i>	: A Sikh (Sanskrit shishya) means a disciple, a learner, a follower of the Sikh religious order founded by Guru Nanak
<i>Singhara</i>	: The water chestnut, an edible water root
<i>Siropa</i>	: Literally from head to foot; a dress of honour
<i>Suba</i>	: A province, a division of a kingdom
<i>Subedar</i>	: The governor of a province
<i>Swar</i>	: A horsemen
<i>Talluqa</i>	: An administrative unit of an area
<i>Tappa</i>	: The sub division of the talluqa or the pargna, containing a varying number of villages
<i>Taraf</i>	: The primary division of a village
<i>Thana</i>	: A garrison stationed usually in a newly conquered territory
<i>Tirni</i>	: Fodder tax from the Sikh <i>jagirdars</i>
<i>Topkhana</i>	: Arsenal or magazine or Artillery
<i>Toshakhana</i>	: A storeroom, a ward robe, chamber in which objects of value or rare articles are kept
<i>Toshakhania</i>	: An Officer incharge of toshakhana
<i>Trak</i>	: A unit of weight in Kashmir, said to be equal to about 4½ Lahore sers or 1/6th of a Kharwar
<i>Vakil</i>	: An ambassador, agent, or representative

<i>Wazarat</i>	: The office held by a Wazir or minister
<i>Wazir</i>	: Lieutenant of a king, a counsellor of a state, a minister
<i>Zabti</i>	: A method of assessment based on measurement and applied commonly to perishable and superior crops
<i>Zafar Jang</i>	: Winner of Battles
<i>Zamindar</i>	: A land-lord, proprietor or an occupant of land
<i>Zamzama</i>	: A famous cannon known as <i>top</i> Bhangian

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, *Role of Select Courtiers and Officials at Lahore Darbar (1799-1849)*, broadly speaking a large number of Hindu Courtiers and Officials, who served the *Maharaja* and also his successor's regime. The *Maharaja* entrusted the talented *Hindus* with Jobs involving very high responsibilities related with the State. Diwan Mohkam Chand amongst the most prominent courtier. Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath and Misr Beli Ram headed the revenue and finance departments of the State of Lahore. Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Ram Dyal and Diwan Ajodhia Prashad worked as top ranking military officers. Diwan Sawan Mal, Diwan Moti Ram, Misr Rup Lal and Diwan Kirpa Ram were some of his best Provincial Governors. Without their participation Ranjit Singh would not have risen to the heights of supremacy in the Punjab. He allowed the *Hindus* virtually to monopolise appointments in the Central Secretariat because the upper classes of the Hindu community had acquired over the centuries a high degree of proficiency in revenue administration and general secretarial work. As compared with them, the other communities like the *Sikhs* and the *Muslims* were just novices. They also assigned them various tasks of responsibilities in the field of civil, judicial, economic and revenue administration as well. He took them into confidence especially in matters of planning military campaigns, setting up boundaries, revenue and finance policies etc. It is quiet important to note that many of the Generals did not have a military background and performed dual roles as administrators and Generals. Infact, by dint of hard work, their caliber, sincerity, loyalty, their military

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services, their participation in various campaigns and the contribution which they made in the battlefield and their contribution in improving the civil administration they won over the hearts of everyone at the Lahore *Darbar*. The role played by these *Hindus* in directing campaigns at Malwa region, Kangra, Jalandhar, Multan, Kashmir, Attock, Mankera were most significant and unforgettable. Their relation with the nobility carried importance because these relations continued to have a deep impact even after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Their relations with the British remained fluctuating according to the changing political circumstances. They worked according to the needs of the *Maharaja* and as per the expectations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lahore *Darbar* as well as the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They were always active and absorbed in performing their duties and responsibilities till 1849.

SUMMARY

In the present thesis I have selected only Hindu Courtiers and Officials at the Lahore *Darbar*. As we knew the court of Ranjit Singh was secular in character and the *Maharaja* was the central figure. As merit was the criterion for appointment, the persons belonging to different religions and races were appointed to high posts. His penetrating look read with great precision the underlying qualities of a man, and he did not care much about the fact that whether the one whom he had chosen was a *Sikh*, *Hindu* or *Muslim*. A single ordinary test was all that he required to form an estimate about the candidate's real worth. He was an absolute despot and nobody could interfere with what he desired to do. The persons he kept around him were generally men of the world, trained in the struggle of life, expert in getting ahead at the cost of others, designing and active in the fulfillment of their duties. No ruler of ancient or medieval Indian History could match Ranjit Singh who had appointed, to important posts, more than forty persons, hailing from more than a dozen foreign nationalities.

Ranjit Singh's courtiers did not form a homogeneous body. They represented various creeds, diverse races and different traditions. They comprised the *Dogras*, the *Muslims*, the *Europeans*, the *Sikhs*, and the *Hindus* and to this may be added the *Brahmins*. The *Brahmins* formed a separate group as they considered themselves distinct from Hindus in general. This approach of the *Maharaja* clearly established that the nature and character of the Sikh state under him was secular.

The *Maharaja* inducted men belonging to different categories and creeds into his service, who later formed influential and powerful

factions. But in so doing he inadvertently tilted the balance in favour of the Dogras which created trouble for the state after his death. Soon after the departure of the magnetic personality of the *Maharaja* these groups entered into internecine collisions and thus hastened the fall of the Sikh Kingdom. The main objective of these different and rival groups was to self-aggrandisement and accumulation wealth and power, while doing so the Dogras outclassed the rest. Most of its members felt actuated more by selfish motives than by patriotism, the jealousy and rivalry among the different families was bound to arise. During the life time of Ranjit Singh there could be seen no signs of open mutual jealousy and rivalry but after his death the conflicts between the various member of the court nobility became more violent to the utter detriment of the interests of the Lahore *Darbar*. Hence, the various factions were incapable of any agreement on political matters and required for their harmonious intercourse the supervision of a predominant mind. This was illustrated by the disgusting conduct of the *Darbar* soon after the death of the *Maharaja* in 1839.

But if such a heterogeneous court was detrimental to the interests of the state, it was in a way a source of strength to its ruler. It provided him with men of his own choice, who he himself had raised to eminence and who depended for their position, wealth and even life on his pleasure alone. Moreover, they could never forge a combined opposition to his will as there were natural differences among them and they had no vested interests or hereditary prestige. In such circumstances, the motive of selfish gain in itself induced the ministers to work well and efficiently under an impulse of loyalty to their master. The motley crowd consisting of the officials of Ranjit Singh's central government secretaries, ministers

and others, therefore, existed on the breath of the pleasure of the *Maharaja*. But on the whole the *Maharaja's* nobles were loyal to him.

There were broadly speaking a large number of Hindu Courtiers and Officials, who served the *Maharaja* and also his successor's regime. The Hindus were drawn from several groups like *Rajputs*, *Brahmins*, *Khattris*, *Ghorkhas* and *Purbias*. The Hindus who belonged to the caste of *Brahmins* and *Khattris* formed quite a large group. In the group of *Khattris*, there were Diwan Mohkam Chand, his son Moti Ram and grandsons Ram Dayal and Kirpa Ram, Diwan Bhawani Das and his brother Diwan Devi Das, Diwan Sawan Mal, and Diwan Karam Chand. In the group of *Brahmins* there were Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Diwan Ajodhia Prasad, Misr Diwan Chand, Misr Beli Ram and his brother Misr Rup Lal. They are appointed to high posts in civil and military department. They produced great warriors and administrators whose more or less exhaustive memories appeared in the historical records of the past. But there were also some other Hindu courtiers and officials who worked at Lahore *Darbar*, but no accounts about them have hitherto appeared. Their careers, roles, achievements, work, contribution and significance also had exceptional merits.

The Hindu Courtiers and Officials in the Court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were according positions of great eminent. They were integrated to the functioning of the *Darbar* and also to the functioning of the Sikh State. Their responsibilities and activities ranged from legislation, conquest, matters of revenue and administration. Full respect was shown to the religion of the *Hindus* also and the people holding the highest jobs in his government, like the *Dogras* brothers, the *Misrs* and others strictly adhered to their Hindu forms of religion. The *Maharaja* entrusted the talented *Hindus* with Jobs involving very high

responsibilities related with the State. Diwan Mohkam Chand amongst the most prominent courtier. Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath and Misr Beli Ram headed the revenue and finance departments of the State of Lahore. Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Ram Dyal and Diwan Ajodhia Prashad worked as top ranking military officers. Diwan Sawan Mal, Diwan Moti Ram, Misr Rup Lal and Diwan Kirpa Ram were some of his best Provincial Governors. They held in expending and consolidating in its efficient functioning. Without their participation Ranjit Singh would not have risen to the heights of supremacy in the Punjab.

It is notable that the Central Secretariat of Ranjit Singh's Kingdom was the centre of his empire. He allowed the *Hindus* virtually to monopolise appointments in the Central Secretariat because the upper classes of the Hindu community had acquired over the centuries a high degree of proficiency in revenue administration and general secretarial work. As compared with them, the other communities like the *Sikhs* and the *Muslims* were just novices. Therefore, the *Maharaja* who attached so much importance to merit, had preference to recruit the majority of personnel for his central offices from the single community of the *Hindus*. The efficiency with which it was run by highly trained and accomplished *Hindus* like Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Ganga Ram, Diwan Dina Nath, Misr Beli Ram etc. is an example in itself who worked in the finance department of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Diwan Bhawani Das organized twelve departments or *Daftars* of the State connected with finance. He brought about a sort of specialisation in civil and military accounts and organised every department. He had full authority over the accounts of *Kardars* and other sources of income. He was not honest enough to be impartial towards his own brethren and relatives. However

dark he may be painted, it is true that he was an able man and ability was the only test with Ranjit Singh in the selection of his servants. Some of the major *Daftars* of the Central Secretariat like *Daftar-i-Abwab-ul-Mal*, *Daftar-i-Abwab-ul-Tahwil*, *Tazuihat*, *Roznamacha* and *Toshakhana* etc. were not only highly organized but were also thoroughly professional in their functioning. On the whole the balance of the secretariat was heavily tilted in favour of one community. Misr Beli Ram worked as a *Toshakhania* or treasurer under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The *Maharaja* places great confidence in him.

The third chapter attempts to analyze the role of Hindu Courtiers and Officials in the financial administration. Ranjit Singh's Sikh empire had well developed and efficient system of financial management. The expenditure and revenue were managed according to well-defined systems. The functioning of finance departments was very well regulated. This was owing to the fact that the sources of income and revenue were systematically explored. The collection of revenue and the regularization of expenditure were carried out by the most experienced financial administrators like Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Dina Nath, Diwan Ganga Ram and helped them by Provincial Governors like Diwan Sawan Mal and Misr Rup Lal. Diwan Bhawani Das's contribution and services at Lahore *Darbar* were uncountable, remarkable and unforgettable. The whole financial system was organized by this intelligent and experienced Hindu. Diwan Ganga Ram were also among the most important courtier. He was an experienced and talented person and due to this reason he served the Lahore *Darbar* to the best of his abilities. He became the head of the Military office and keeper of the royal seal. Diwan Ganga Ram simplified the system of keeping records. He organised the *Abkari* (excise)

system. After the death of Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Dina Nath became head of Finance Department of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Hence, during the reign of Ranjit Singh, we find that the revenue and secretariat departments were entrusted to *Hindus* who had always served in this capacity even in the Muslim court of Delhi and Kabul. In civil administration, Ranjit Singh gave preference to *Hindus*.

In the next chapter analyze Hindu Courtiers and Official's role as military Commanders and Generals, their rank, status and position; their military services, their participation in various campaign and contribution made in the battlefields. As stated earlier in the main text of this thesis *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh in particular and a few of his successors in general simply liked them and depended on them for their conquests and also their proficient administration in the conquered areas. They also assigned them various tasks of responsibilities in the field of civil, judicial, economic and revenue administration as well. *Maharaja's* relations with them were never unfriendly. He took them into confidence especially in matters of planning military campaigns, setting up boundaries, revenue and finance policies etc. It is quiet important to note that many of the Generals did not have a military background and performed dual roles as administrators and Generals. His earlier conquests were undertaken, when Ranjit Singh was consolidating his power, with the help of these Courtiers. His conquests in *Malwa* region, Jalandhar, Multan and Kashmir in particular and also those of Attock, Mankera, Hazara were the direct result of their hard work, boldness, courage, passions and farsightedness of these Hindu Generals. Maharaja Ranjit Singh at his disposal some of the most distinguished Generals like Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Ram Dayal and Diwan Bhawani Das and Diwan Ajodhia Prashad.

Diwan Mohkam Chand was a shrewd general of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He had a sound knowledge of Military tactics and strategy. It was because of their experience under different rulers that these Hindu Courtiers and Officials played a very important role in the establishment of the Sikh Kingdom. He had not seen a defeat; he was an ever victorious general. He was equally talented in conducting civil administrative affairs. From 1806 to 1814 he remained with almost all the military campaigns of the *Maharaja* as the chief military advisor and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Diwan Mohkam Chand led some very important conquests like *Malwa* region in 1806 and 1807, Kangra in 1809, Jalandhar in 1811, Kashmir in 1812, Attock in 1813 etc. Mohkam Chand was one of the ablest Generals of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was the most loyal, devoted and trustworthy subordinates. He was one of the architects of the Sikh Empire who rose by dint of merit to the post of *Diwan* and virtually the commander-in-chief of the Sikh forces.

Following him other Hindu General Misr Diwan Chand who was hardworking, courageous and brave general of *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh. He extended the borders of his empire far and wide by conquering Multan in 1818, Kashmir in 1819, and Mankera in 1821. He proved to be a very sincere throughout his life and played a very important role in the growth, development and consolidation of the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. No doubt his military activities can not be questioned but he was not a good administrator. Misr Diwan Chand had the support of Dogras, one of the most important figures at Lahore *Darbar*, because he introduced the Dogras to the *Maharaja*. Above all he was an excellent soldier and military commander with a professional skill of a high degree.

Diwan Ram Dayal perform highly significant roles in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He held in expanding and consolidating in its efficient functioning by participating as a divisional commander in the expeditions of Kashmir in 1814 and 1819, Multan in 1818 and Hazara in 1820. However, one unfortunate event shadowed in his career which was the death of his son, Ram Dayal in 1820 who was also a brave commander. Without their participation Ranjit Singh would not have risen to the heights of supremacy in the Punjab.

Diwan Bhawani Das, who though professionally a civil administrator had all the genius for military activities. He took part in the siege of Jammu in 1809, Attock in 1813 and Kashmir in 1814 and 1819. Thus he was a man of great ability. Diwan Ajodhia Prashad was worked as pay master of *Fauji-i-Khas*. His relations with *Europeans* especially with Ventura and Allard, were on excellent terms. He was very popular with the Sikh soldiery especially after the demise of the *Maharaja*. He was from all accounts eminently successful performing all kinds of duties : administrative judicial, military and diplomatic. The Hindu Generals after making the conquests were made the Governors of the conquered territories and most of the cases governed their territories most efficiently.

Their role as provincial Governors is also significant. As pointed out, most of the Generals of Ranjit Singh performed the dual task of military expansion and administration. They not only conquered these areas, rather, when they were appointed Governors of the conquered territories maintained peace, law and order in those regions like Diwan Mohkam Chand. Besides them Ranjit Singh had some of the best Hindu provincial administrators like Diwan Sawan Mal, Misr Rup Lal, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Kirpa Ram etc. under him. They won over the hearts

of the inhabitants of these areas because of the treatment they meted out to them, particularly in the field of revenue and justice. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's whole administrative machinery (revenue and finance) fully depended on Hindus. There was an elaborate system of territorial division in place which helped in making civil administration regulated and organized. The territories were divided into *Pargnas*, *Subas*, *Talluqas* and villages. These were placed under various administrative officers like *Kardars* and *Nazims*. The Hindu Civil administrators under Ranjit Singh proved to be capable and wise. The most important civil administrators like Diwan Sawan Mal and Misr Rup Lal also introduced innovative administrative reforms.

Diwan Moti Ram son of Diwan Mokham Chand served the Lahore *Darbar* in civil as well as military capacity. But his work in the civil administration is highly notable. Diwan Moti Ram as a Governor of Jalandhar and Kashmir introduced many reforms for the welfare of the people.

Diwan Sawan Mal's contribution in the provincial administration is remarkable. As a Governor he displayed a tremendous capacity for hard work and effected great improvements during a long reign. Diwan Sawan Mal is stated in every account to have been efficient and progressive who he did great work in the judicial field. During his administration a number of masonry wells for irrigation were sunk. He caused canals to be dug round Multan and gave an impetus to commerce and industry. He promoted colonization by giving people land and protection. Thereby he converted a desert into a cultivated region. His revenue reforms were based on the principles of low taxes, moderate assessment and reduction in extra charges imposed on the cultivations. The prosperity brought about by such efforts of Diwan Sawan Mal attracted the notice of some

contemporary British officials and travellers who happened to pass a number of times through the Governorship of Diwan Sawan Mal. Though, during the quarrel between Sawan Mal and the Dogras, Maharaja Ranjit Singh always favoured the Dogras but Sawan Mal never became a rebel and he was always royal to the *Maharaja*. He never misused his power. The time of Diwan Sawan Mal is still regarded by the people with esteem. Every segment of the population gained from his administration whether it was the Hindu, the Muslim peasants or the Pathans. Some people say that he had prejudices against the Mohammedans. It is most probably untrue. He was just and did his best to give good rule to the people. He deserves to be called one of the greatest Governors. He could wield pen and sword equally well and it was a matter of great credit to him.

Misr Rup Lal was also recognized the among best Governors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He proved himself not only an excellent administrator but a great reformer as well. He was upright just and beyond corruption.

Diwan Kirpa Ram performed multifarious duties as a *Nazim*, a *Diwan*, a soldier and an administrator but he was well known as a Governor. However, amongst the Sikh Governors, Diwan Kirpa Ram enjoyed the best reputation. Intelligent and having unique ideas of magnificence, he beautified Srinagar with many fine buildings. His time of viceroyalty is compared by the people of the valley to those pleasant days when Jahangir used to make an annual visit.

No doubt they were given special privileges and perks. Their contribution and service especially in the military and civil administration were worth a lot, their presence and role in day to day activities and the impact they left in various walks of life, such as

political, military, social, cultural, judicial etc. was not only great but ever lasting.

No doubt they were give special privileges and perks. Their contribution and service especially in the military and civil administration were worth a lot, their presence and role in day to day activities and the impact they left in various walks of life, such as political, military, social, cultural, judicial etc. was not only great but ever lasting. Indeed their presence helped the *Maharaja* and his successors in keeping the indigenous elements under effective control.

Intrigues have always been inextricably linked with politics. In a desire of greater power and influence courtiers often indulge in conspiracies and intrigues. Here, it is worth mentioning that after the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the role of Hindu Courtiers and Officials in intrigues and treacheries at the Lahore *Darbar* was crucial and significant. They decidedly assisted in improving the civil administration as well as military. Being men of varied talents and tastes they were interested in duties of various natures. We have seen how efficiently they performed their duties and to what extent they proved helpful/useful to the Lahore *Darbar* during the life time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and also in the times of his successors. Throughout their presence at the Lahore *Darbar* they remained relevant either because of their relations with the British, with other nobles and even sometimes with the common people. The Hindu Courtiers and Officials of Ranjit Singh's *Darbar* were also sometimes constrained to indulge in intrigues and conspiracies.

Amongst the court nobility of the Sikh *Darbar* Diwan Dina Nath was unique. He was infact an accomplished person, courteous and considerate, well educated, though nothing of a scholar. Dina Nath soon

distinguished himself, but it was not till the later days of the *Maharaja* that he came to be regarded as a prominent figure. He was an expert in statistics and financial information regarding the Punjab. Though, basically he was interested in civil administration yet he performed many jobs in military activities as desired by the *Maharaja* and his successors. He also came up to their expectations. The secret of Diwan Dina Nath's success lay in the fact that he studied closely every changing political situation of his country like a true diplomat or rather an opportunist and availed himself accordingly. He had no scruples and no convictions. His opportunism, however was of a different kind. He was a man who had to work against unscrupulous and ambitious leaders. Thus it was natural for him to set his own welfare above abstract principles. But to secure this he never betrayed the cause of his masters. On the other hand, he laboured hard for the good of the state. Among the Sikh barnos who stood around the throne of the young Maharaja Dalip Singh, there was not one who honestly laboured for his country or who would have made the smallest sacrifice to save it. If Dina Nath was not more honest than his contemporaries he was at least more patriotic. Without his clear head and business like habits it would have been almost impossible to disentangle the *Darbar* accounts during the time of Regency. He was respected for his financial ability, his moderation and reserve. Diwan Dina Nath was bold, morally courageous and free from the vices of the time. It was his position and his intimate knowledge of the financial affairs that rendered Diwan Dina Nath indispensable to the early British administrators for sometime after the annexation of Punjab in 1849.

Misr family was also prominent, Misr Beli Ram being its most important representative at the Court. He was one of the most trustworthy courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and worked as a

Thoshakhania during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and after his demise. His master never doubted his ability, work and contribution at Lahore. He had served with dedication never betrayed his master. Misr Beli Ram was a man of great intelligence and the *Maharaja* was fully aware of his worth.

As Hindu Courtiers and Officials enjoyed greater prestige and prominence in Ranjit Singh's court, they were often victims of jealousy. This made them easy targets of other factions like those of *Sardars* and *Dogras*. A couple of Hindu courtiers like Misr Beli Ram and Misr Ram Kishan even lost their lives due to intrigues. A few others like Misr Rup Lal either lost their jobs or fell out of the favour of the *Maharaja* and Kirpa Ram were to retire to places like Banaras. Diwan Mohkam Chand's family for three generations had rendered good and brilliant service for the *Maharaja* but this did not save them from the ingratitude of their Master. Diwan Mohkam Chand, the eldest member of the Diwan family, was the best and most successful general and it was in great measure owing to his military ability that the *Maharaja* established himself as the sole ruler of the Punjab. But this did not save his son Moti Ram or his grand son Kirpa Ram from constant slights, fines, confiscations and eventual ruin. An important evidence of the loyalty of the Hindu Courtiers and Officials can be found in the fact that like many others they did not shift loyalties during the Anglo-Sikh wars.

Infact, by dint of hard work, their caliber, sincerity, loyalty, their military services, their participation in various campaigns and the contribution which they made in the battlefield and their contribution in improving the civil administration they won over the hearts of everyone at the Lahore *Darbar*. The evolution of the Lahore *Darbar's* Central Secretariat under these officials was of great value and result oriented.

Thus the character and nature of the financial system got new orientation and proved to be of great utility to the Sikh State. The role played by these *Hindus* in directing campaigns at Malwa region, Kangra, Jalandhar, Multan, Kashmir, Attock, Mankera were most significant and unforgettable. Some of them along with the military services, rendered notable services in the civil administration of the state also. Particularly the services of Diwan Mohkam Chand, Misr Diwan Chand and many others in the service of civil administration were of high quality. Similarly some of those who performed their duties in the civil administration also directed the campaigns in the military field. Particularly the contribution Diwan Bhawani Das, Diwan Dina Nath, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Kirpa Ram and many others is notable. It was the result of their commitment, discipline, way of life and loyalty towards the Lahore *Darbar* that the *Darbar* was noted for its greatness.

Their relation with the nobility carried importance because these relations continued to have a deep impact even after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Let it be noted that the other factions of the nobility at Lahore *Darbar* were not less important; these factions were given due place, status, position, duties, responsibilities, privileges and perks sometimes, even more than those of the Hindu Courtiers and Officials. It was chiefly due to their having similar qualities and merits which the *Hindus* were having that they were jealous of these *Hindus* as the latter enjoyed extraordinary confidence of their ruler.

Lastly, after the death of Maharaja Ranit Singh the *Hindus* who remained loyal to the Lahore *Darbar* began to take active part in political conspiracies and started indulging in treacheries and intrigues along with *Sardars* against the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the *Dogras*. Their relations with the British remained fluctuating according to the changing political circumstances. Most of the time relations with

the British were dictated by the relations between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the British. Thus, Maharaja Ranjit Singh succeeded, when he enlisted them in the service of Lahore *Darbar* running the military and civil administration efficiently.

To conclude, Diwan Devi Das, Misr Basti Ram, Bakshi Bhagat Ram, Rattan Chand Duggal, Rattan Chand Darhiwala, Diwan Karam Chand, Misr Megh Raj, Misr Ram Kishan, Misr Sukhraj, Diwan Shankar Nath, Misr Rallia Ram, Misr Sahib Dayal, Rai Kishan Chand, Diwan Hakam Rai, General Harsukh Rai, Diwan Devi Sahai, Misr Jassa Mal and many more Hindu Courtiers and Officials served the Lahore *Darbar* during the life time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and even after his demise. They worked according to the needs of the *Maharaja* and as per the expectations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lahore *Darbar* as well as the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They were always active and absorbed in performing their duties and responsibilities till 1849.